

An Economic Strategy for the Mendip area

2006–2011

Draft Action Plan



MENDIP
DISTRICT COUNCIL



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The draft action plan provides a first impression of the sorts of actions needed to address the issues outlined in the main part of the economic strategy. The overarching aim is to create a more enterprising and business friendly culture in the Mendip area. The six key objectives are :

- 1 Promoting Mendip as an attractive, sustainable location for business
- 2 Ensuring that businesses are effectively supported
- 3 Improving skills
- 4 Improving prosperity and vibrancy in the towns, villages and the countryside
- 5 Developing the tourism sector in a sustainable way
- 6 Proactively addressing transport and infrastructure

These objectives have been developed into a draft action plan. The objectives are not in any specific order and one objective is not considered to have more weighting than another. Many of the actions identified develop existing initiatives. As a result of drawing up this action plan, some initiatives are already being worked upon such as the current work on business investment and promotion.

Following consultation, work will be needed to agree with the various partners a more detailed delivery (SMART) action programme and to find the resources needed to deliver the programmes of work and actions. It is anticipated that Mendip District Council as a key partner of the Mendip Strategic Partnership will develop its own delivery plan.

Most importantly, this draft action plan provides a common framework for all key partners and stakeholders and that it is supported by the business community and the residents of the Mendip area.

Abbreviations used

CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau	SCC	Somerset County Council
CATEC	Community Advice, Training and Employment Centre	SES	Somerset Economic Strategy
DEFRA	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs	SLIM	Skills and Learning Intelligence Module
DTi	Department for Trade and Industry	SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
FETE	Frome Education Training Enterprise	STDMO	Somerset Tourism Destination Management Organisation
FSB	Federation of Small Businesses	STP	Somerset Tourism Partnership
GOSW	Government Office of the South West	SWESA	South West Enterprise and Skills Alliance
HEI	Higher Education Institutions	SWRDA	South West Regional Development Agency
LAA	Local Area Agreements	SWT	South West Tourism
LEA	Local Education Authority	T2015	Towards 2015
LSC	Learning Skills Council	TICs	Tourist Information Centres
MACoC	Mendip Association of Chambers of Commerce	TSN	Tourism Skills Network (Somerset)
MDC	Mendip District Council	VB	VisitBritain
MSP	Mendip Strategic Partnership		
RES	Regional Economic Strategy		

I. Key objective: Promoting Mendip as an attractive, sustainable location for business

What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Increase business investment in Mendip	RES, LAA (Outcome 7)	<p>Carry out research to investigate what would encourage specific types of small scale investors and businesses to develop and grow in Mendip</p> <p>Develop a proactive business investment, promotion and marketing strategy focussed on key sectors</p> <p>Direct marketing to identify key potential inward investors</p>	MDC, MSP sub group, MACoC, consultants, owners of employment land and premises, SWRDA, SCC,	<p>Increase the number of SME's relocating in the area</p> <p>Amount of new investment attained.</p> <p>GVA per capita (relative performance)</p> <p>Private investment levered into Mendip</p>
Retain and increase indigenous business investment in Mendip	RES, Business Leaders and community, business plan	<p>Carry out research to find what makes Mendip an attractive location for small businesses, why companies wish to stay within Mendip and what would encourage them to stay?</p> <p>Use evidence to identify / form an approach for retention of businesses</p> <p>Strengthen planning policies to reduce loss of all employment sites through the Local Development Framework</p> <p>Continue to develop a proactive business ambassador service</p> <p>Mitigation of effects upon the supply chain</p>	<p>MDC, MSP sub group, MACoC, consultants, owners of employment land and premises GOSW, SCC,</p> <p>MDC and MSP</p> <p>MDC</p> <p>MDC</p> <p>MDC</p>	<p>% of business planning applications determined within 13 weeks</p> <p>Increase in private investment in Mendip</p> <p>Improve the perception of Mendip as a place to do business</p> <p>Increasing the number of SME's starting and developing in the area</p>

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Improve the way that Mendip is perceived by investors, businesses, potential workers and visitors	RES, business plan, business community	<p>Deliver an enhanced image campaign to reinforce key strengths and opportunities of Mendip</p> <p>Identify a brand for the Mendip area with the unique selling points of towns and villages.</p>	MDC, MSP, business community, Somerset Economic Partnership, SW Tourism	Clear understanding of conditions for successful marketing of Mendip
Promote Mendip as a place to be and a place to do business	LAA (Outcome 7), Somerset Vision and Community Plan, Business community	<p>Link into the proposed Somerset Inward Investment Marketing Strategy which is promoting Somerset as a whole but will be honing into specific aspects – use opportunity to promote Mendip places and / or key Mendip sectoral businesses</p> <p>Encourage press and PR visits</p> <p>Use opportunities to promote both tourism and business in Mendip such as use of advertising space in documents being distributed for tourism or business promotion and franking outgoing post</p> <p>Promote the key attributes of each of the five main settlements of the Mendip area linking the business opportunities and the tourism attributes</p> <p>Link into Somerset Tourism Partnership promoting towns and themes such as Destination Wells</p>	<p>Somerset Strategic Partnership, SCC and MDC</p> <p>MDC</p> <p>MDC</p> <p>MDC</p> <p>MDC, Somerset Tourism Partnership</p>	Improve perceptions of Mendip as a business location

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
<p>Ensure a suitable supply of diverse business premises and sites to meet demand for business growth and new businesses including incubator units</p>	<p>RES, SES (strategic objective 2), business community</p>	<p>Identify and put measures in place to address specific market failures through initiatives to encourage the private sector back into the market</p> <p>Consider the flexibility of locations that businesses are able to operate from to reflect structural changes in the economy through the Local development Framework and by dealing with businesses on a “one to one” basis.</p> <p>Promote sustainable construction to increase affordability and energy efficiency such as an information pack.</p> <p>Assist in the promotion of key employment sites to ensure take up of employment land</p>	<p>MDC, SWRDA, private sector, New Commission for Rural Communities</p> <p>MDC, DEFRA, Commission for Rural Communities</p> <p>MDC</p> <p>MDC, land owners</p>	<p>Reduction of businesses citing lack of suitable premises as a barrier to growth and establishment</p> <p>Planning permissions implemented</p> <p>Floor space created and taken up</p> <p>Business start ups</p>

2. Key objective: Ensuring that businesses are effectively supported

What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Better and more effective business network and support for all Mendip businesses	SES (Strategic objective 1), business plan, business community	Continue to support and work with the Chambers of Commerce and MACOC to enable MACOC to become more robust and healthy	Chambers, MACOC and MDC	Enhanced partnership working and networking between businesses and local agencies
	RES, LAA (Outcome 8), business plan, SES (Strategic Objective 3)	Support the development of the Environmental Business Network to enhance innovative approaches to sustainability and support demonstrator projects for renewable energy technologies	MACOC, Wessex Chambers of commerce, MDC and business community	Increased levels of activity in target sectors
		Enhance liaison and networks between the business community and other local partnership bodies through the Mendip Business Exchange	FSB, MACOC, MDC	
		Support growth and productivity of key sectors (food and drink, tourism, aerospace and advanced engineering, creative industries and environmental technologies)	Work with sector development agencies such as Somerset Destination Management body, SW Tourism, Creative Industries Development Agency, Business Link, MDC, Mendip Business Exchange, SCC	
		Link into Somerset Economic Leaders Group in particular to assist in the development of sector networks		

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Improve communication for all businesses and agencies	Business community and leaders, LAA (Outcome 7), business plan	<p>Cascade out to other partners the developing good practice on the “business ambassador” initiative and other measures to assist enterprise development</p> <p>Provision of a business information pack to include sign posting to improve accessibility to agencies and business related information and provide more effective communications as to how able to support businesses.</p> <p>Improved signage for trading estates and businesses parks</p>	<p>MDC</p> <p>Business Link, FSB, MACOC, MDC, SCC</p> <p>Individual Businesses, MDC</p>	Provide more readily accessible information to support businesses
Encourage creation of new businesses, diversity and growth	RES, LAA (Outcome 9), SES (Strategic objective 2), Business plan	<p>Develop additional provision for start up businesses with high growth potential</p> <p>Consideration of an exceptions policy for rural workspace schemes in the Local Development Framework</p> <p>Promote development and diversification of rural enterprises</p>	<p>Business Link, MDC, SCC, SWRDA and Dti</p> <p>MDC</p>	<p>Numbers of SME's assisted by Mendip</p> <p>Planning permissions implemented</p> <p>Floor space created</p> <p>Floor space take up</p>

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
<p>Develop a culture of enterprise and innovation</p>	<p>RES</p>	<p>Improve provision of enterprise advice information and encouragement to young people</p> <p>Promote and market business and enterprise as an exciting and potentially rewarding career option eg through Enterprise Ambassadors or champions to promote enterprise and new start ups</p> <p>Support Young Enterprise Scheme</p> <p>Assist in developing a more creative approach in enabling young people to experience the workplace</p> <p>Promote business networking to encourage greater innovation and technology transfer especially sector based innovation initiatives</p>	<p>LEA, Schools, Strode College, Business Link, Connexions SWRDA, Regen SW, Sustainability South West (SSW), South West Ventures Fund (SWVF), Somerset Education Business Partnership</p>	<p>Increase in number of school / college leavers establishing their own businesses</p> <p>Creation of jobs and new businesses</p>

3. Key objective: Improving skills

What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Provide employment advice and training, community learning classes, access to advice and information services and links to secondary school for work related learning	LAA (Outcome 10)	Support progress of a feasibility study of Market Towns Employment Project through the provision of a multi –use facility in Shepton Consider the potential viability of a community learning facility in Frome	CAB, Adult Learning and Leisure, Job centre Plus, Whitstone School, Early Years Childcare Development Partnership, MDC, Market Towns Employment Project and Rural Renaissance Frome Education Training and Employment, MDC, SWRDA and Rural Renaissance.	Improve skills and awareness of opportunities
Seek training opportunities	Business leaders Business community	Actively engaged in ensuring a good range of accessible programmes for the emergence of the National Employer Training Programme (Train to Gain) for businesses in 2006 Help to facilitate leadership and development of businesses to encourage them to plan for the future Identify what training is available in the Mendip area and what training can be taken to businesses Provide opportunities for businesses to help them to understand how training can help their business	Strode College Business Link, MDC Business Link, Strode College, CATEC and FETE	Number of businesses signed up for the training

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
<p>Raise individuals skills, aspirations for work and enterprise and accessibility to work</p>	<p>RES, LAA (Outcomes 7 and 10), SES (Strategic Objective 3), business community</p>	<p>Link into and develop the work of Sector Skills Councils and tailored sector skills programmes to enhance transferable skills</p> <p>Commission an annual survey of employer needs to identify and provide co-ordinated responses to emerging skills gaps and shortages to include the provision of appropriate FE and HE courses</p> <p>Assist in the development of FE and HE courses in response to identified business demand for skills</p> <p>Provide education for sustainable development</p> <p>Establish Skills for Life programmes to improve levels of literacy, language and numeracy</p> <p>Promote and develop School Business Partnerships</p> <p>Work with schools and education authorities to extend opportunities for attaining basic and employability skills and provide opportunities for enterprise training for pupils to try taster sessions in the workplace</p> <p>Provide targeted support for economically inactive</p> <p>Promote adult learning to enable people to adapt and develop new skills for work</p> <p>Encourage training in the work place upto NVQ Level 2 or equivalent</p>	<p>Sector Skills Councils, Skills for business Network, SLIM, LSC, Learning SW, Schools and colleges, Private sector, SWESA, HEI, Job Centre Plus, Connexions, Learn Direct, SW Skills for Life Unit, Somerset Skills Alliance, Business Link and Somerset Education Business Partnership</p>	

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Promote the use of technology in businesses	RES, LAA (Outcome 8), SES (Strategic objective 3), business community T2015, STDMP	<p>Promotion of awareness of Broadband coverage and increase take up especially through Connecting Somerset</p> <p>Promote and support ICT initiatives</p> <p>Develop ICT solutions to increase the take up of training employment and enterprise advice including e-mentoring and sharing of good practice through networking and web design</p> <p>Promote improvements in the e-government programme such as e-tendering</p> <p>Encouraging SMEs to engage in e-adoption including websites, Broadband, via training seminars, etc.</p> <p>Implementation of the county-wide 'Visit Somerset' e-tourism project for marketing, database and customer contact management, accommodation bookings, website development, etc.</p>	<p>Connecting Somerset, BT Business Link, MDC, SCC and SWRDA,</p> <p>TSNSW, SWT, STP, MDC</p> <p>STP,TICs, MDC</p>	100 tourism businesses in Mendip to participate by 2010

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4. Key objective: Improving prosperity and vibrancy in the towns, villages and the countryside

What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Promote sustainable communities	Business plan, LAA (Outcome 9 and 10), SES (Strategic Objective 5 and 6) RES	<p>Publish and implement 5 Area Regeneration Programmes for each of the main settlements and their hinterlands to include a tourism emphasis to boost tourism investment</p> <p>Support the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI) in Shepton Mallet and its hinterland</p> <p>Support the development of the Glastonbury Town Plan</p> <p>Development of the Rural Renaissance Programme</p> <p>Develop a rural regeneration programme to specifically address rural issues and to assist in providing more opportunities for villages to remain sustainable communities</p> <p>Facilitate the bringing forward of brownfield sites and flexibility of business space especially in rural areas</p> <p>Support Parish Plans</p> <p>Targetted multi agency action to increase skills and enterprise and reduce worklessness in deprived neighbourhoods</p>	Parish Councils, Town Councils, City Council, MDC, SCC, MACoC, T2015, STDMP Community Council, Rural Renaissance, SWRDA, Shepton 21, Connexions, Job Centre Plus, Somerset Rural Youth Project and the business community	<p>Rural proofing</p> <p>Adopted community plan for Shepton Mallet</p> <p>Approved Glastonbury Town Plan</p> <p>Prioritised list of projects / initiatives to be pursued</p>

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
	<p>Business community</p> <p>Bus. Leaders</p> <p>Bus. Leaders</p>	<p>Link into Market Towns Employment Project</p> <p>Encourage business involvement and sponsorship in regeneration to help provide a feel good factor relating to local selling points such as public art</p> <p>Build on Mendip's environmental and heritage capital such as the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme in Shepton Mallet</p> <p>Support local enterprises such as markets and village shops</p> <p>Market the market towns to their own markets</p> <p>Develop niche markets for local retailers</p>		
To improve accessibility to rural areas for employment, education and training		Promote and support community transport initiatives through Transport for Somerset such as Somerset Rural Youth Project Moped Loan Scheme and community car scheme	Parish Councils, Town Councils, City Council, MDC, SCC and Transport for Somerset	

5. Key objective: Developing the tourism sector in a sustainable way

What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
More cost-effective promotion of the Mendip area as a quality visitor destination, under Somerset generically, or by specific themes	T2015, STDMP, business community	More collective marketing of Somerset under a 'Sub-Regional' approach – based on agreed outcomes from the current review of tourism activity in Somerset as a whole – via possible establishment of a single Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for Somerset.	STP, SWT, TICs, MDC, other Councils and the private sector	Visitor Nights/Visitor Spend figures, plus reports from tourism businesses
Create a 'quality not quantity' ethos for tourism, to be sustainable in all senses (environmental, economic, social)	T2015, STDMP, business community	<p>Increase 'spend per head' through effective marketing, quality standards, etc.</p> <p>Raise the quality of jobs in tourism, with good career prospects</p> <p>Ensure tourism developments are appropriate, enhance the environment, and involve local communities in key decisions</p> <p>Ensure industry compliance with current legislation and quality standards, including disability access.</p>	<p>STP, SWT, TICs, MDC</p> <p>TSNSW, FE Colleges, SMEs, MDC</p> <p>LAA, Parish Councils, MDC</p> <p>VB, SWT, STP, TICs</p>	<p>Achieve long-term economic, environmental and social benefits from the local tourism economy</p> <p>Achieve 75% trade take-up of all relevant inspection schemes (accommodation, green tourism, disabled access, attractions, etc.) by 2010</p>

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Improve market intelligence of tourism activity in the area, to increase competitiveness	T2015	Participate in regular regional/sub-regional research projects, to gather up- to-date information on market trends, visitor attitudes, and future opportunities	SWT, STP, MDC	Enable effective implementation of marketing and development plans
Review the operation and funding of local Tourist Information Centres as important contact points for visitors/residents	STDMP, business community	<p>Assess opportunities for local TICs to work more effectively together to maximise visitor provision, income generation, through a review of current activities, comparisons with other areas, new emerging national/regional criteria, use of ICT, etc.</p> <p>Develop an agreed collective Business Plan for all Mendip's TICs, and revised Service Level Agreements</p>	VB, SWT, STP, MDC, Parish Councils	Longer-term reduced requirements on local authority funding in real terms, balanced against increasing trade contributions and commercial income

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Maximise the economic benefits of events and special promotions to the Mendip economy	Business community	<p>Promote and support annual events and festivals (including off season events) especially through local promotion such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mendip Food & Drink Festival • Mendip in Bloom floral competition • Carnivals • Events at the Bath and West Showground • Frome festival • Glastonbury festival 	Individual organisers, festival committees, MACOC, Police, MDC.	Substantive reports of increased visitor patronage and spending, via tourism businesses, TICs, etc, plus specific surveys where possible
<p>Consider ways that the Mendip tourism economy might benefit from the London Olympics in 2012</p> <p>Support for arts and leisure</p>		<p>Build on rail links with Weymouth (location for sailing events), via Frome Station</p> <p>Work with Millfield School to maximise its benefits as an Olympic training centre</p>	<p>SWT, SCC, First Great Western, Wessex Rail Partnership, MDC</p> <p>Sport England, MDC</p>	

6. Key objective: Proactively addressing transport and infrastructure

What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Use the Mendip Rights-of-Way network more effectively as a resource for tourism and leisure activities	STDMP	Develop, and promote a range of themed trails in specific parts of the district (for walking, cycling, horse riding)	SWT, SCC, Rural Renaissance, MDC, Shepton 21	Increase the number of rural businesses directly benefiting from the promotion of rights of way trails
Extend provision of off-road/safe 'Multi-User' routes in the area (for cycling, walking, horse riding, wheelchair users)	STDMP	Work with relevant agencies and communities to ensure the completion and promotion of linear routes such as: The Strawberry Way (former Wells-Cheddar rail line) The Colliers Way (former Frome-Radstock rail line)	Sustrans, SCC, MDC, BANES. Shepton 21 and Rural Renaissance	As above
Encouragement of usage of bus services and improvement to routes		Lobby to improve routes particularly linking with rail connections Support and promote the extended summer and part time winter operations for the Tor bus	MDC, SCC MDC, SCC, Glastonbury Town Council and Mendip Community Transport MDC	

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What are we trying to achieve?	Links into	How it can be achieved?	Potential Key Partners	Possible Targets / Outcomes
Improvements to car parking and on street provision		To undertake a strategic car parking review of the car parks in the Mendip area to assess demand, supply, pricing structure and maintenance. Decriminalisation of car parking	MDC	
Maximise benefits of the proximity of Bristol Airport	T2015	Promote the airport as an excellent long-distance transport link for business and tourism purposes, in appropriate media	SCC, SWT,VB, MDC	
Maximise use of Frome Station as Mendip's only mainline rail link	Business community	Develop parking and infrastructure at Frome Station, to maximise opportunities from the new First Rail franchise (April 2006 on) Promote new hourly connection to London in business and tourism publications, ebsites, etc.	First Rail, Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership, MDC	Increased passenger figures for Bristol-Weymouth and Frome-London rail services
Redevelopment of sites		Take the opportunity whilst redeveloping sites to rationalise the infrastructure, travel plans and transport assessment work	MDC, SCC	