



**West Lothian Economic Partnership**  
Strategy and Action  
Plan 2014-17



## West Lothian - Scotlands Hub

- Business Friendly
- Skilled Workforce
- Modern Industrial Estates
- 60% of Scotlands population within 60 minutes
- Excellent commuter links
- Enterprise Area status
- Great Quality of life





## Our Objective

**Our objective is to:** Maximise the area's economic potential through creating the conditions for a strong and growing business and employment base, offering a range of employment opportunities to a highly motivated and skilled workforce.

### ➤ Foreword

West Lothian's strategic location between Edinburgh and Glasgow makes it Scotland's economic hub.

West Lothian has the youngest, fastest growing population in Scotland, a business friendly community and a track record in attracting inward investors as well as growing indigenous businesses.

The loss of the 1,700 VION/Halls jobs in Broxburn in February 2013 was a significant blow to the West Lothian economy. The scale and localised nature of the impact of the closure put unexpected and heavy pressure on West Lothian Council and partners. The Scottish Government in recognition of this has committed significant additional resources over the next 3 - 5 years in the form of the Economic Growth Plan.

The Economic Growth Plan provides a range of support to West Lothian Council and partner agencies including Scottish Enterprise (SE) and Scottish Development International (SDI) to deal with the economic impact of the loss of jobs. This support includes:

- Enterprise Area for Food & Drink
- Additional business growth support for business
- Community Regeneration Fund

The interventions are worth up to £29.18 million over the next 3 - 5 years and will deliver support to 3,000 individuals and contribute to the sustainable recovery of West Lothian.

Delivering the Economic Growth Plan will be a major challenge for all the agencies who make up the West Lothian Economic Partnership. However, we are determined to ensure its success and that West Lothian's economic potential is met.

**Cllr Cathy Muldoon,**

Executive Councillor Development & Transport,  
West Lothian Council



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## Context

The West Lothian Economic Strategy is a key driver in delivering the outcomes set out within the West Lothian Single Outcome Agreement. In particular the Economic Strategy will deliver:

### > Outcome 2

We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities.

### > Outcome 3

Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business.

The strategy will contribute towards realising other Outcomes. The two core economic outcomes are intrinsically linked – e.g. better quality employment opportunities depend on growing a diverse and dynamic economy; a better educated (and higher skilled) population is a key factor in making West Lothian an attractive place for doing business.

The economic climate over the last five years has been challenging with a reduction in the local employment base (an estimated 8% fewer jobs in 2013 than 2008). Unemployment and under-employment have increased as a result of the global down-turn and recession.

Following a sharp increase in unemployment after the closure of the Vion plant in January 2013, there are now some positive signs, with the number and rate of unemployment on a downward trend.

The strategy aims to reinforce this trend by continuing to drive economic growth through support to enhance the local skills base and create new jobs and opportunities in West Lothian.



## > Strengths

West Lothian's hub location within Scotland is its key economic strength – as a place to live, work, invest and visit

West Lothian is better connected and more integrated within the wider Scottish and global economy than ever before

The business and employment base continues to evolve and diversify with technology based manufacturing, life sciences, business services, and retail and distribution being particularly strong

Wage levels have improved relative to Scotland both for residents and workers based in West Lothian

Unemployment levels are now just below the Scottish and UK level

## > Opportunities

The members of the West Lothian Economic Partnership do not control all the levers but working together we can help create the conditions for sustainable economic growth. Businesses and potential entrepreneurs are the key stakeholders in achieving a more dynamic economy and effective engagement with them will be critical

Despite recent job losses, West Lothian has a strong track record in attracting investment and growing businesses in a number of priority sectors. West Lothian has strong local presence in bio-science, engineering and technology sectors with high R&D and design content. There is an opportunity to consolidate and build on our position as a growth zone for technology driven businesses – and encourage more young people to pursue an education and vocational training pathway in appropriate skill sets

Enterprise Area Status for Food and Drink focused on sites in Broxburn and Livingston. Investment in Superfast Broadband will give West Lothian the best digital infrastructure in Scotland with more than 99% of premises connected

## > Weaknesses

Entrepreneurship levels are still below the Scottish and UK levels

Youth unemployment is higher than the Scottish level and addressing this remains a very significant challenge

Some communities and areas continue to experience higher levels of deprivation and economic exclusion

Job losses have been sustained in recent years with total jobs located in West Lothian peaking at 78,000 but falling to 73,000 in 2013

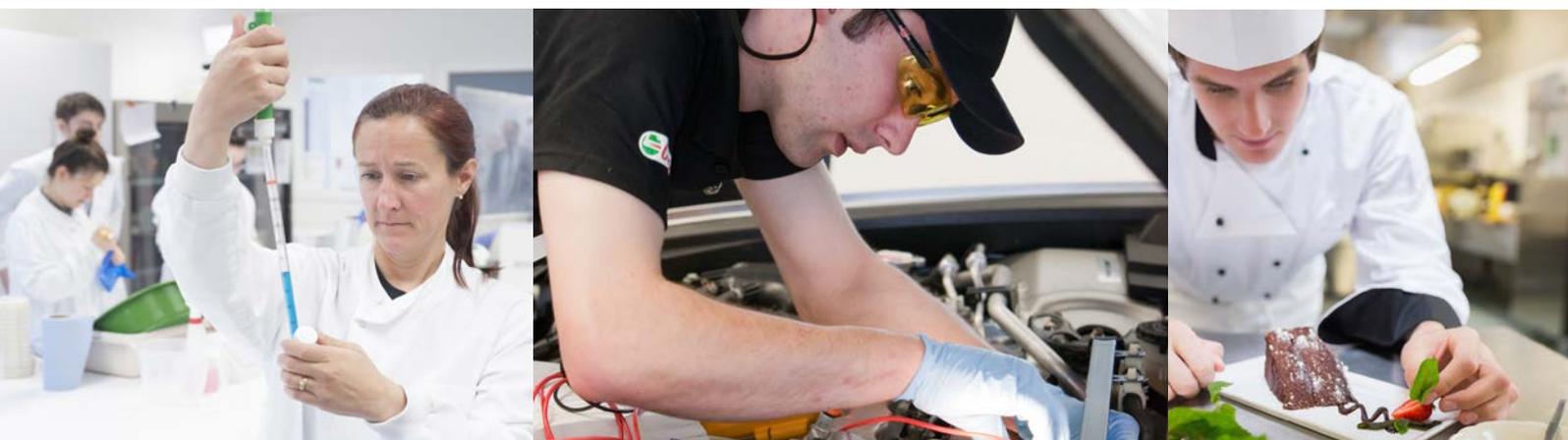
## > Threats

An uncertain global economic climate and the danger that the economy might continue to grow slowly

West Lothian has a small number of large private and public sector employers, which provide a disproportionate share of total jobs. The 10 largest employers employ 21,000 of the 73,000 total. The area therefore remains potentially vulnerable to change and job losses, which might occur amongst these key employers

Regenerating communities and reconnecting the most marginalised young people to the world of work requires a long-term and co-ordinated approach – changes to the welfare system will particularly impact on communities and individuals and will put additional demands on services

Local regeneration has benefited from significant levels of external funding. This is likely to diminish as EU funding available to the UK and Scotland is reduced and refocused





## Strategy Development

The Economic Strategy will be delivered by a wide range of partner organisations that make up the West Lothian Economic Partnership:

- › West Lothian Council
- › Scottish Enterprise
- › West Lothian Chamber of Commerce
- › The Department for Work and Pensions
- › West Lothian College
- › Scottish Rural University College (Oatridge)
- › Federation of Small Businesses
- › Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian
- › Skills Development Scotland
- › Visit West Lothian
- › Major local employers

The strategy has been developed in consultation with these partner organisations as well as representatives of the local business community.

The strategy and associated action plans are underpinned by thorough understanding of economic intelligence about West Lothian. Economic partners are committed to building on this knowledge base to inform delivery of the strategy by:

- › Sharing information of partner actions and activity,
- › Disseminating knowledge between partners and with businesses and other organisations
- › Providing environmental scanning and intelligence on threats and opportunities
- › Highlighting good practice and positive developments

The Economic Strategy is also closely linked to the emerging West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP)

The LDP seeks to continue to promote West Lothian as an area of growth both in terms of the economy and population so that it can continue to make an important contribution to the Edinburgh City Region and Scotland. The provision of a generous supply of land for housing and employment uses will therefore be key aims of the LDP.

To support the council's Economic Strategy and Regeneration Action Plan, it is proposed that the LDP will review existing employment land allocations,

promote new sites to maintain the supply and offer a range of sites to cater for future needs. In addition, it is proposed to allocate a range of mixed use allocations to cater for uses which do not readily sit well in traditional employment locations. Such uses could include dance studios, crèches and places of worship.

### **Key considerations for employment land supply moving forward include:**

- a) the need to ensure that the right quantity and quality of serviced and marketable employment land is available in the right locations in West Lothian to support the future growth and diversification of the economy, having particular regard to servicing the needs of potential growth sectors
- b) to protect our existing business areas in a way which recognises their value to the economy of the area, whilst allowing an appropriate level of flexibility in their future use
- c) to identify the key areas for tourism development over the plan period
- d) to identify strategic transportation issues which constrain economic growth in the area, and make provision for their resolution
- e) to provide for greater flexibility in terms of the range of uses available within certain employment areas and industrial estates to meet demand and to aid economic recovery, without compromising the role of town centres



## Delivering the Strategy – Action Plans

The strategy will be underpinned by 8 action plans which reflect different streams of work being delivered by the council and economic partners. These action plans provide the detailed delivery of economic interventions and form an integral part of the Economic Strategy. As noted above, the Action Plans should not be viewed as being wholly separate but as interlinked work streams.

### Business Development Action Plan

#### Purpose

Support businesses through building an entrepreneurial culture, supporting business start-ups and early stage company growth to increase the overall stock of businesses.

#### Activities

- a) Deliver Business Gateway support which responds proactively to support start-ups with significant growth potential
- b) Provide a single integrated access point for business customers aligning support provided through the Business Gateway with other business facing services
- c) Promote a culture of entrepreneurship in partnership with other key stakeholders – including schools, colleges and community organisations
- d) Ensure West Lothian's growth sectors are supported
- e) Encourage innovation and knowledge transfer between businesses
- f) Enhance and support local supply chains - enabling local firms to benefit from supplier opportunities in the public and private sector
- g) Develop the existing business base, and enable businesses with growth potential to access funding

- h) Maximise the potential of the social enterprise sector by developing a clearly defined strategy for the sector

#### Performance

- a) Number of VAT/PAYE businesses based in West Lothian – increase number of businesses per 10,000 residents from 306 to 312
- b) Business registrations per annum – increase number and businesses per 1,000 residents
- c) Survival rate of new business registrations – increase the 3 year survival rate to 62%
- d) Total number of jobs located in West Lothian – increase from 73,000 to pre recession levels of 75,000
- e) Increase the number of businesses and jobs found in key sectors
  - (i) Tourism and hospitality related
  - (ii) Knowledge rich sectors
  - (iii) Other priority sectors
  - (iv) Indigenous businesses with 10-49 employees
  - (v) Indigenous businesses with 50-100 employees
- f) Number of business start-ups supported
- g) Employment generated by supported business starts
- h) Value of investment secured by existing firms supported

### Investment Action Plan

#### Purpose

Support investment in West Lothian, complementing and collaborating with national agencies including Scottish Enterprise and SDI and where appropriate collaborating with neighbouring authorities

#### Activities

- a) Promote West Lothian as a destination for new investment, building on our established strengths as a location rich in technology based businesses and activity
- b) Provide a seamless and integrated service to new investors by council and partners
- c) Improve the area's competitiveness as an investment location, including for new visitor attractions
- d) Support development of Heartlands and Core Development Areas as economic growth hubs
- e) Maximise the impact of our Enterprise Area status to support jobs growth
- f) Maximise the benefits of super-fast broadband to strengthen business capacity, connect communities and enable access to services

#### Performance

- a) Number of VAT/PAYE businesses based in West Lothian – increase number of businesses per 10,000 residents from 306 to 312
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- f) Median earnings (£s) for full time employees working in West Lothian– improve wage levels relative to the Scottish average
- g) Value of investment secured by new firms supported

## ➤ Town Centre Action Plan

### Purpose

Maximising the potential of West Lothian's town centres through working in partnership with the business community, BID companies and town centre groups.

To improve and promote traditional town centres as retail, leisure, employment and visitor locations. To attract professional business services to traditional town centres

### Activities

- a) Targeted investment in regenerating traditional town centres
- b) Initiatives to promote increased town centre footfall
- c) Promote and build on the Business Improvement Districts

### Performance

- a) Town centre occupancy levels – to exceed 90%
- b) Increase in town centre events
- c) Leverage secured from town centre investment

## ➤ Tourism Action Plan

### Purpose

Promote West Lothian as a visitor and tourism destination building on the area's distinct offering.

### Activities

- a) Raise the profile to regional, national and international visitor markets
- b) Maximise the potential of digital technology to market the area and improve customer experience
- c) Facilitate collaborative working within the sector to strengthen the visitor product

- d) Maximise the ambassadorial role for businesses in promoting West Lothian to visitors and investors
- e) Develop and implement a long term vision for tourism in West Lothian

### Performance

- a) Increase annual visitor numbers to our top 4 attractions – Increase by 50,000 from baseline of 303,000 in 2011-12
- b) Increase the value of tourism to local economy increase the total value from baseline estimate of £153.81m
- c) Return on investment/leverage secured from tourism investment



## ➤ Regeneration Action Plan

### Purpose

Regeneration is the holistic process of reversing the economic social and physical decline of places where market forces alone will not suffice. West Lothian has specific challenges in the former mining areas in the south-west and central Livingston where headline levels of disadvantage including unemployment, financial exclusion, poor health and lower educational attainment are higher, and residents of these areas will generally have poorer life outcomes.

Regeneration contributes to improved social cohesion, increased economic participation and reducing future demands on the public purse. The approach in West Lothian is extending and developing early and preventative interventions targeted at those most in need, with the aim of narrowing the disparity of life choices and chances between those in the most disadvantaged communities (the worst 20% of data zones) and the West Lothian average.

### Activities

- a) Increasing employment rates and incomes across West Lothian.
- b) Improving the ability of children in poorer families to participate successfully in nursery and primary school.

- c) Involving communities in activities which are aimed at reducing health inequalities.
- d) Developing positive opportunities arising from the Core Development Areas and other significant developments.
- e) Getting the active involvement of those most affected by regeneration initiatives.

### Performance

- a) Reducing the difference in employment deprivation between the West Lothian average and the average in the in the worst 20% of datazones by half ie increase from 22.5% to 17.4%
- b) Reducing the difference in income deprivation between the West Lothian average and the average in the in the worst 20% of datazones by half ie reduce from 23.9% to 18.4%
- c) Reducing the difference in the S4 average tariff score between the West Lothian average and the average in the in the worst 20% of datazones by half ie increase from 162.1 to 184.2.
- d) Reducing the difference in income deprivation between the West Lothian average and the average in the in the worst 20% of datazones by half ie increase from 84.0% to 86.8%
- e) Reducing the difference in life expectancy between the West Lothian average and the average in the in the worst 20% of datazones by half ie increase from 73.4 to 74.8 years for males and from 76.9 to 78.3 years for females

## Jobs Action Plan

### Purpose

Promote access to jobs – ensuring all young people have an opportunity to progress into a positive destination on leaving school, and maximising the impact of national employment initiatives. The Council will work in partnership with national agencies, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), training providers and employers to deliver sustained job outcomes for job candidates.



### Activities

- a) Ensure that a skills pipeline of high quality and tailored training and employability programmes are in place to prepare young people for the world of work linked to the recruitment needs of businesses
- b) Targeted action to support other individuals with barriers to employment – complementing programmes delivered by national agencies
- c) Maximise the contribution of the Council as an employer in providing modern apprenticeship, work placement and training opportunities
- d) Ensure effective delivery of employability initiatives for 25-64 working age jobless (who form the majority of unemployed)
- e) Deliver a joined-up and simplified offer to employers on recruitment, apprenticeships, access to potential employees – building on current partnership approach
- f) Adopt a sector based workforce academy approach to respond to employers' recruitment needs

### Performance

- a) Percentage of the working age adults in work – Increase from 74% to 75%
- b) Percentage of 18-24 year olds claiming Job Seekers Allowance – Reduce from 6% to 4%
- c) Percentage of adults in receipt of key out of work benefits – reduce from 13.4% to 12.0%
- d) Median earnings (£s) for resident in West Lothian – improve wage levels relative to the Scottish average
- e) Percentage of residents of working age qualified to SVQ2 and above
- f) Percentage of residents of working age qualified to SVQ4 and above
- g) Percentage of school leavers entering positive destinations
- h) Percentage of WL College full time student leavers entering positive destinations
- i) Number of young people (16-24 year olds) obtaining employability support/training
- j) Number of young people (16-24 year olds) obtaining employability support/training and securing employment or other positive outcomes
- k) Number of people 25 and over supported into sustained work

## ➤ Skills and Lifelong Learning Action Plan

### Purpose

Invest in improving skills levels within West Lothian - the Council has a specific role in respect of school and community based provision and also works in close partnership with other agencies including West Lothian College to deliver a joined up skills strategy for West Lothian.

### Activities

- a) Ensure that a skills pipeline of high quality and tailored training and employability programmes are in place to prepare young people for the world of work linked to the recruitment needs of businesses
- b) Introduce the Journey2Employment which will deliver:
  - (i) Core employability skills including literacy, numeracy, IT and customer service
  - (ii) Ensure skills provision responds to employer needs
- c) Develop and deliver programmes, which combine customer-service skills and appropriate work experience.
- d) Promote career path in key sectors including retail and tourism
- e) Build more connections between schools and colleges and employers
- f) To enable the delivery of an inclusive model of lifelong learning from a range of providing partners across West Lothian.
- g) Improve access to lifelong learning by removing barriers

and reviewing how and when learning opportunities are offered by consulting and engaging key stakeholders.

- h) By 1 September 2015, publish a 3 year plan in accordance with Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013

### Performance

- a) Median earnings (£s) for resident in West Lothian – improve wage levels relative to the Scottish average
- b) Median earnings (£s) for full time employees working in West Lothian– improve wage levels relative to the Scottish average
- c) Percentage of residents of working age qualified to SVQ2 and above
- d) Percentage of residents of working age qualified to SVQ4 and above
- e) Percentage of school leavers entering positive destinations
- f) Percentage of West Lothian College full time learners entering a positive destination increased from 90% to 96%
- g) Percentage of primary, secondary, special schools and pre-school establishments receiving positive inspection reports 100%
- h) Percentage of the resident, working age population qualified to SVQ4 and above increased from 33.9% to 35%

## ➤ Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan

### Purpose

Development of a Thriving and Enterprising Third Sector is essential for the delivery of West Lothian's Vision.

The future of the third sector in West Lothian and across Scotland must be one of innovation and fresh ideas. The development of enterprising activity and of social and community enterprise is a key driver for change. The potential to improve the lives of local people and the local environment is huge, as we move towards a self-sustaining, independent and dynamic Third Sector.

Social enterprises play a pivotal role in supporting communities by increasing community leadership and cohesion. An enterprising Third Sector can build social capital, promote the benefits of co-planning, support the delivery of effective services, reduce local inequalities and achieve improved outcomes for residents in areas of highest need.

### Activities

- a) Support the development of the entrepreneurial capacity of social enterprise in West Lothian through the 'Governance, Capacity and Funding Improvement Programme'.
- b) Enable access to a range of business support and available finance

- c) Open up procurement/commissioning practices, including the use of community benefit clauses, to enable access to new markets through the development of a commissioning improvement framework
- d) Encourage the development of a recognised voice for an enterprising third sector through the West Lothian Social Enterprise Network
- e) Improve opportunities for asset transfers to social enterprise and enterprising third sector organisations through the development of a West Lothian Council Asset Transfer Policy
- f) Support events to raise the profile and demonstrate the value of social enterprise and an enterprising third sector.

### Performance

- a) Number of Social Enterprise supported with business or funding advice
- b) Development and implementation of an Enterprising Third Sector strategy
- c) Development of a West Lothian Council asset transfer strategy
- d) Delivery of 'Governance, Capacity and Funding Improvement Programme'
- e) Improved Outcomes delivered through community benefit clauses
- f) Improved links with and support from the private sector.

## ➤ Appendix 1: Performance Scorecard

### Economic Outcome Indicators

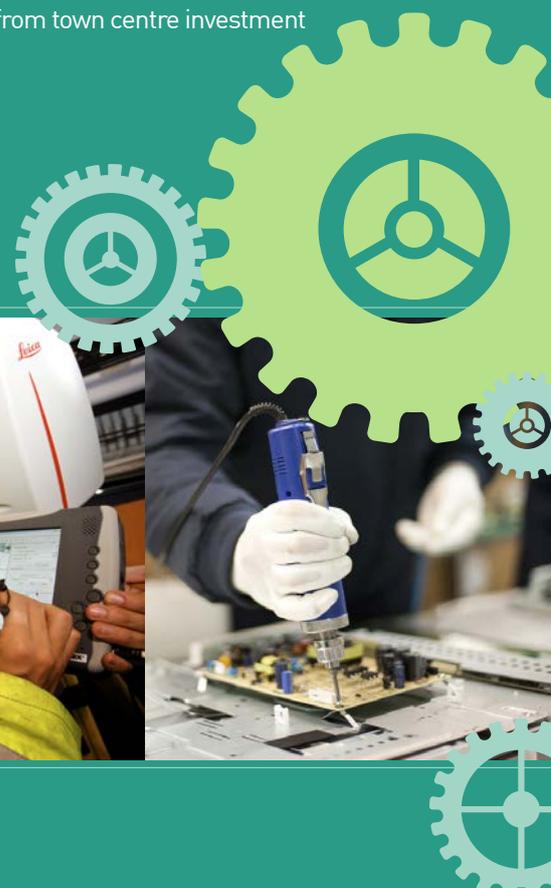
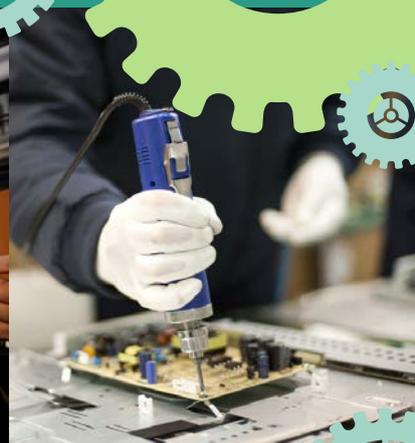
These are the high level outcome indicators that will track progress – but will be influenced by many other external factors and cannot be directly attributed to service delivery. These are also linked to the Single Outcome Agreement performance framework and targets will be reviewed on an annual basis:

- c)** Number of VAT/PAYE businesses based in West Lothian – increase number of businesses per 10,000 residents from 306 to 312
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- e)** Survival rate of new business registrations – increase the 3 year survival rate to 62%
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- i)** Town centre occupancy levels – to exceed 90%
- j)** Increase annual visitor numbers to our top 4 attractions – Increase by 50,000 from baseline of 303,000 in 2011-12
- k)** Increase the value of tourism to local economy increase the total value from baseline estimate of £153.81m
- l)** Percentage of the working age adults in work – Increase from 74% to 75%
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- e)** Percentage of residents of working age qualified to SVQ2 and above
- f)** Percentage of residents of working age qualified to SVQ4 and above
- g)** Percentage of school leavers entering positive destinations
- h)** Percentage of WL College full time student leavers entering positive destinations

### Action Plan Performance Indicators

These are the core performance indicators which can be directly attributed to delivery. Each action plan will also have a number of other theme specific performance measures:

- a)** Number of business start-ups supported
- b)** Employment generated by supported business starts
- c)** Number of Social Enterprise supported with business or funding advice
- d)** Value of investment secured by existing firms supported
- e)** Number of young people (16-24 year olds) obtaining employability support/training
- f)** Number of young people (16-24 year olds) obtaining employment or other positive outcomes
- g)** Number of people 25 and over supported into sustained work
- h)** Return on investment / leverage secured from tourism investment
- i)** Leverage secured from town centre investment



**Business Gateway**

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