

# Economic Development Strategy

## Video Transcript

Worthing is developing a new Economic Development Strategy.

[Ann Barlow] – Hi, I'm Councillor Ann Barlow from Worthing Borough Council and I have Economic Development and Regeneration in my portfolio. The video today is to promote the Economic Development Strategy and the consultation process that's going on throughout the town. To show that the Council isn't a standalone organisation we've engaged and encouraged our partners, in the business community to be involved in this video today.

[Chris Chapman] – Hi, I'm Chris Chapman. I work for the South East England Development Agency, known to everybody as SEEDA.

[Peter Bennett] – Peter Bennett. I'm the President of the Worthing Chamber of Commerce and Industry and have been the president for the last five years.

[Sharon Clarke] – I'm Sharon Clarke, Worthing Town Centre Manager and I work for the Worthing Town Centre Initiative. We're a business group focussed on trying to enhance the town centre and make it as viable and exciting as possible.

[Pam Thornton] – I'm Pam Thornton, part of the Federation of Small Businesses, the Worthing and Adur branch.

[Roger Foregard] – I'm Roger Foregard, a Board Member of Worthing First and Chair of the Transport and Infrastructure sub-group.

[Ann Barlow] – We're looking at doing an overview of all types of business, not just the town centre, but at the business trading parks right across the district. And really we want to look at a plan, a Strategy that isn't the Council telling the businesses what to do. We want to engage with the businesses, find out what their concerns are, how we can address them, how we could actually work together. Maybe bring in new ideas, new ways of thinking, and especially in today's economic climate, when there's so much uncertainty. I think this is a really critical step for Worthing, to develop the Strategy. And it's so important to the Council that we've allocated extra resources. We're making this a real priority now. We want to support the community but also engage with the business community.

[Peter Bennett] – The Economic Development Strategy is critically important for Worthing as a town, unless we want to end up as a dormitory for Brighton or a dormitory for Crawley. We want to have our own businesses here, where our children and our grandchildren can find jobs and prosper in their own town.

[Chris Chapman] – The Worthing Economic Development Strategy Consultation is a very important exercise for everybody in the business community to get involved. Get their input in so that they can have no doubt as to the outcome and no doubt as to how valuable their views are.

[Sharon Clarke] – From the Town Centre Initiative’s point of view, we recognise that the whole of Worthing needs, a really good plan about where it wants to go in the future. And while we now have the Masterplan for the town centre, a lot of businesses may have one or two different sites that they are working with, and they need to know what’s going on for the whole of town.

[Roger Foregard] – I would like to see a very vibrant business infrastructure placed all around the district, where people can actually say that they are proud of being in business in Worthing.

[Pam Thornton] – The next eighteen months are crucial. The Economic Development Strategy is going to help us move everything forward. Bigger business, bigger town and more work for everyone and therefore the economics of Worthing are going to improve.

[Ann Barlow] – The really important thing is to be honest and share your views. And if you recognise things in the town as an overall town, not just in the town centre, or maybe you’re aware as a business of problems with transport or community links, whatever it is, be honest and share those views. You can always get in touch with Suzy and Tina at the Town Hall and your views will be fed back in to the Strategy, to look at how we can address these. Also they will come back into the options that will be presented in January. It is really, really important that this Strategy isn’t us telling you how to do your job. It’s up to you to tell us how can we aid and assist, and serve you better. If we don’t have a vibrant economy, the Council can promote Worthing all we want but we need a vibrant economy here to sustain the town.

[Chris Chapman] – I've been with SEEDA for six years and I've seen other towns get involved and have a consultation exercise and it's proved extremely valuable. The business community undoubtedly benefits from the outcome, so long as the input is relevant to the concerns they have, for the area in which they live and Worthing is one of our priorities.

[Pam Thornton] – Worthing itself is a wonderful place to live and work. This is an opportunity for all the Federation of Small Business members, and all the businesses in Worthing to become a whole; to be joined up and to be focussed on how we move forward for the future.

[Sharon Clarke] –You can always review what you're doing and there's always room for improvement. I think that the team has come together now. All of the business groups are working very well together, although sometimes business groups will disagree. There are certain situations where different representations may have a different view on things. But this leads to healthy debate and that's what you want. You want healthy debate as that's where you come up with something that's robust and sustainable for the future.

[Roger Foregard] – Businesses have a duty on themselves to contribute to the economic development of the town and they then should actually express their views.

[Peter Bennett] – We want businesses to make their voices heard. We want businesses to reply; we want businesses to make their concerns

known to us and to the Council, so that we can formulate and input into the Economic Development Strategy. If businesses don't say what they want and what they think, it won't get in the Strategy. That's the crucial issue. I always think of the A27 as one where businesses were quiet and we lost the A27, not solely due to that, but businesses were silent. We need to make our voice felt.

[Ann Barlow] – The original consultation was a business questionnaire which hopefully all businesses in the town did get and return. And if you didn't, it's not too late to send them back. In January 2009, there will be an Issues and Options document, which will be based on the responses from the questionnaire in March 2007. That begins another consultation period for you to look at the Issues and Options that have already put forward from your thoughts and ideas, and to feed in there if you think that the Council's got it wrong, or if there are areas that you think need a higher priority than they've got at the moment. In preparation for the final draft strategy to be presented to the business community, there'll be research analysis going on as well as the business input. And again, it's really, really important to get your feedback before we adopt it. And when I say adopt it, I don't mean just Worthing Borough Council adopt it, I would really hope that the whole business community can adopt this strategy, as the way forward for Worthing over the next ten years.

For further information please contact Tina Barker or Suzy Bastable from the Economic Development Team on 01903 221306 or [ecodev@worthing.gov.uk](mailto:ecodev@worthing.gov.uk).