



MEDIA RELEASE

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New Knysna Economic Development Strategy now available for input.

Knysna Municipality has compiled a new draft Knysna Economic Development Strategy. This document is now available for public comment.

“We developed this draft Economic Development Strategy (EDS) during the 2018/2019 financial year, as part of our local government mandate,” said Knysna Executive Mayor Mark Willemse. “The aim of this entire process is for us, as your local municipality, together with the private sector and the local community, to create a planning guide that will promote economic growth, enable job creation and address and alleviate poverty in Greater Knysna.”

The draft EDS discusses policy alignment, development enablers, the state of Greater Knysna’s economy, identifying potential economic opportunities and outlines economic planning framework. It also offers implementation guidelines for all stakeholders

“Our strategy focussed on identifying mechanisms to enhance Greater Knysna’s competitive environment to facilitate inclusive, sustainable economic growth,” said Willemse. “We have also identified existing resources, infrastructure and skills within the greater Knysna municipal area and investigated how these elements may be best leveraged to create sustainable opportunities for all stakeholders.”

“The main purpose of our draft EDS is to evaluate the information we have available on our economy in an integrated and coordinated manner,” he explained. “This leads to identifying those opportunities that may broaden the economic base of our area. These opportunities are packaged into implementation framework, setting out guidelines along which our existing economic potential could be utilised to create exciting, successful spin-offs for our local economy.”

Willemse said that the draft EDS aims to ensure that Knysna Municipality can effectively and efficiently facilitate the creation of an appropriate, empowering environment. “Of course, it is important that this environment is not only conducive to our economic development, but also for outside investment into our local economy.”

It stands to reason that this may only be achieved with a comprehensive understanding of the current development environment within Greater Knysna. “For this reason, the analysis will consider the current demographic, socio-economic and economic profile within our area, as well as the trends related to these respective factors. This will also highlight the main challenges we are facing and propose a framework for economic development interventions that respond to the identified economic challenges.”

A draft EDS had been compiled in 2016. One of the specific objectives of the new Draft EDS, that has a 10 year planning horizon, was to revise and update the 2016 draft EDS to ensure that it is a credible strategy. Other specific objectives include:

- aligning the 2016 draft EDS with the municipality's Economic Development Department's annual work plans and strategic focus areas;
- updating the socio-economic profile to reflect the latest available statistics and new ward delineations:
- developing an infrastructure investment pipeline linked to the capital expenditure/investment framework proposed in the Spatial Development Framework (SDF);
- linking with the SDF to identify growth nodes;
- updating the Sector Potential-section of the 2016 draft EDS to reflect new trends and projects;
- determining the critical factors necessary to implement projects;
- updating and refining the implementation action plans in terms of EDS-interventions that can be performed by role players from the public- and private sector;
- developing the findings and specified interventions into a strategic document for adoption by Council;
- developing a prioritisation model for the outcomes of the sector potential analysis; and
- linking the draft EDS action plan to the institutional arrangement for the Economic Development Department to ensure that it is properly implemented, with appropriately identified and allocated roles and responsibilities.

"You can imagine that a great deal of research goes into compiling a document of this sort and might wonder where all of this underlying information is sourced from", said Willemse. "A number of different primary and secondary data sources were consulted in compiling our draft EDS."

Primary research activities included site visits throughout the greater Knysna municipal area and targeted engagements with sector specialists. Market research relating to the prices, rental rates and vacancy of commercial and residential properties was also undertaken. Finally, various interviews were held with different government departments and members from the broader community.

Secondary research was primarily focussed on statistical analysis. "Statistics were obtained from a number of different sources. We did acknowledge limitations with statistical analysis, but every effort was made to test statistical results against observable reality throughout the document."

Other secondary research focussed on reviewing a range of national, provincial and local planning documents. It also considered several other sectoral documents and surveys undertaken at both a national and local level. Specific source-documents are cited throughout the report.

"Although we have conducted all of this research, worked through our findings and compiled them into this draft Economic Development Strategy, we know that it can never be complete without your consideration and input," Willemse concluded.

"I invite all interested residents – from the public and private sector, to scrutinise the report and to send us your input and constructive criticism. This is how we build an inclusive, innovative, inspired and successful economy for Greater Knysna – and ensure its future: together."

The draft Knysna Economic Development Strategy Executive Summary should be read in conjunction with the draft EDS. Both documents are available from our municipal offices on Church Street, municipal libraries, and at <http://www.knysna.gov.za/greater-knysna-economic-development-strategy/>.

Queries may be directed to Mr Petrus van Niekerk, Manager: Economic Development, at 044 302 6366 or pvanniekerk@knysna.gov.za. Respondents are welcome to submit any input by no later than 3 October 2019.

ENDS

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