

Economic Development and Investment Policy

Policy Owner	Chief Executive Officer
Version Number	1
Next Review Date	May 2030

1. Statement of Intent

Economic development is a key function of Council aligned with the Local Government Act 1999, supporting initiatives that improve the quality of life for the community and promote the area as an attractive location for business, investment and employment.

This Policy establishes the strategic framework through which Council facilitates economic growth, investment attraction and employment opportunities across the district. It integrates a place-based (precinct) approach with a coordinated investment attraction function to support a resilient, diverse and sustainable local economy.

Light Regional Council recognises that economic development is fundamental to increasing local employment, supporting population growth, strengthening community wellbeing and enhancing long-term prosperity. The region is experiencing steady population growth and economic expansion, with Gross Regional Product of approximately \$1.1 billion and growing at an average rate of 6% over the 2020-2025.

Council will:

- Support and facilitate investment that creates economic value, employment and broader community benefit;
- Promote the region's competitive advantages, including its agricultural base, proximity to Adelaide, growing population and developing employment lands;
- Apply a targeted and coordinated approach to investment attraction, including the identification and promotion of strategic precincts;
- Ensure that economic development activities align with community objectives and do not unnecessarily hinder appropriate development.

Council's priority sectors and economic focus areas will be informed by the Light Regional Council Economic Analysis Report (as updated from time to time), which identifies existing strengths such as agriculture, manufacturing, education and construction, and emerging growth opportunities including health care, professional services, tourism-related industries, retail and logistics.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Council activities that influence or support economic development and investment attraction within the Council area.

This includes:

- Investment attraction and facilitation activities
- Engagement with existing and prospective businesses and investors
- Promotion of the region and its economic opportunities
- Strategic identification and activation of precincts
- Consideration of incentives and support mechanisms (as governed by relevant procedures)

This Policy does not replace or override:

- Statutory planning and development assessment processes
- the administration of Council's Sponsorship, Grants and Incentive Scheme
- sponsorships, donations, advertising, naming rights, service level agreements or joint ventures
- dealings with commercial entities that:
 - o primarily relate to growth dependent investment in residential and/or retail developments
 - o are primarily for the purpose of achieving the delivery of Council-owned assets and
 - o are contracted by State or Federal Government agencies or Government owned corporations to deliver infrastructure and/or services within the region.

3. Legislation and References

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- *Local Government Act 1999*
- *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*
- Planning and Design Code
- Light Regional Council Strategic Plan
 - o Community – Identifying and advocating for affordable housing, infrastructure and facilities for the existing and growing population
 - o Transport – Improving the quality and safety of Council roads; Advocacy for improved bus and rail services, roads and speed limits; Creating pleasant and connected pedestrian and cycle routes; and Exploring community transport opportunities
 - o Sustainability – Protecting and restoring natural areas and creating sustainable landscapes
 - o Economy – Protecting agriculture and character areas and enhancing associated industries, including manufacturing; Encouraging value add enterprises and economic diversification; Investing in initiatives designed

to attract investments that also benefit our community; Creating vibrant main-streets and infrastructure to support local businesses; Improving tourism information and wayfinding to extend visitation

o Leadership – Transparency of Council decisions

- Light Regional Council Economic Analysis Report (as updated from time to time)
- Public Private Partnership Policy
- Rate Rebate Policy
- Separate Rate Policy
- Developer Engagement Statement of Business Ethics Policy
- Privately Funded Code Amendments Policy
- Investment Attraction Procedure
- Precincts Framework
- Unsolicited Proposals Procedure
- Activating Opportunities Procedure

This Policy should not be considered as the only document that may relate to economic development and investment, other tiers of government, agencies or organisations may have legislation or policies that also apply.

4. Application

Position	Responsibilities
Elected Members	Support this Policy through strategic direction, advocacy and decision-making aligned with Council's economic development objectives.
Chief Executive Officer	Provide leadership to ensure the effective implementation of this Policy and foster a Council-wide culture that values economic prosperity and employment outcomes.
General Managers	Ensure that Council operations and decision-making align with this Policy and support coordinated economic development outcomes.
Managers	Integrate economic development considerations into team/service function planning, projects and service delivery, and support investment facilitation where relevant.
Workers/Employees /Volunteers	Consider economic development implications in the planning and delivery of services, projects and decisions, and support a positive investment environment.

5. Definitions

Case Management	The coordinated management and support of an investment enquiry or proposal to facilitate its progression through Council processes.
Economic Development	Activities and strategies that seek to increase an area's level of income and wealth, create employment opportunities and improve community wellbeing.
Investment Attraction	The proactive and targeted activities undertaken by Council to encourage new investment or reinvestment within the region that delivers economic value.
Precinct	A defined geographic area identified by Council as having strategic potential for economic development, investment or employment growth.
Strategic Precinct	A precinct identified by Council as a priority location for investment attraction based on economic, planning and infrastructure considerations.
Strategic Merit	The degree to which an investment proposal aligns with Council's economic development objectives, including employment creation, industry development and community benefit.

6. Policy Principles

Council will apply the following principles in delivering economic development and investment attraction activities:

6.1. Strategic and Value-Based Investment

Council will support investment and reinvestment that:

- Creates sustainable employment opportunities
- Strengthens local supply chains and industries
- Contributes to economic diversification
- Delivers broader economic and social value for the community

6.2. Facilitation Role

Council will act as a facilitator and enabler of investment by:

- Providing clear, timely and coordinated engagement with investors
- Reducing unnecessary barriers to appropriate development
- Supporting informed decision-making by investors

6.3. Place-Based (Precinct) Approach

Council will identify and promote strategic precincts across the district that align with:

- Economic opportunities
- Infrastructure capacity
- Planning policy
- Community objectives

These precincts will form a key focus for investment attraction and economic development activities.

6.4. Prioritisation of Resources

Where Council's Economic Development resources are constrained, priority will be given to:

- Investment proposals and opportunities located within identified strategic precincts; and
- Proposals that demonstrate strong alignment with Council's economic development objectives and strategic merit.

This prioritisation will inform the allocation of case management resources, proactive engagement and investment attraction efforts.

6.5. Collaboration and Partnerships

Council will work collaboratively with:

- Regional organisations (e.g. Regional Development Australia, Regional Tourism Organisation)
- State and Federal Governments
- Industry stakeholders and the local business community

to strengthen economic outcomes and leverage opportunities.

6.6. Support for Existing Business

Council recognises the importance of the existing business community and will:

- Support business growth and resilience
- Ensure that investment attraction does not unnecessarily undermine existing businesses
- Promote fair and equitable treatment

6.7. Evidence-Based Decision Making

Council will utilise data and analysis, including the Economic Analysis Report, to:

- Identify priority sectors and opportunities
- Guide investment attraction activities
- Monitor economic performance and outcomes

7. Review Schedule and History

This document will be reviewed by the Policy Owner:

- as determined below; or
- earlier in the event of changes to legislation or related Policies or Procedures; or
- if deemed necessary by the Policy Owner,

in consultation with identified stakeholders, to ensure that the Policy continues to meet legislative compliance and the requirements of Council needs.

Policy Owner Chief Executive Officer

Version Number 1

Adopted By Council

Adopted On 28 July 2026

Resolution Number OCM-2026/130

Legal Requirement Not Applicable

Review Frequency 4 Years

Next Review Date July 2030

Version History

Version No	Adopted On	Resolution Number	Adopted By
1	28 July 2026	OCM-2026/130	Council