



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	7 April 2008
Key Decision:	Yes
Listed on Forward Plan:	Yes
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	Yes
Directorate:	Regeneration and Growth
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Richard Church
Ward(s)	All

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Council's Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy will be a key document for the Borough and relates directly to the Corporate Plan to 'promote economic development and growth in Northampton'. The strategy sets out the economic and regeneration vision and priorities for NBC and its partners. The document also puts into words the actions that are required to achieve this objective over a projected time period 2008 to 2026. Using national and regional, planning and economic regeneration policy the Council needs to lead this process supported by its partners.
- 1.2 The strategy is in line with the Corporate Plan priority 4 objective stating that '*we will promote economic development and growth in Northampton*'
- 1.3 This report seeks Cabinet approval of The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy and recommends its adoption by Council.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That cabinet is asked to consider the Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommends the adoption of the Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy to Council.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy aims to provide an agreed direction for Northampton's Future. Northampton is within the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth area; this Central Government Growth Agenda gives Northampton greater opportunity than most places in the UK. The number of houses in the town is set to increase from the current 88,000 to 120,500 by 2026. This projected increase in housing and associated growth in population gives an opportunity to regenerate the town and build on the successes that Northampton has to offer. From planned housing growth comes the increased demand for retail, jobs, leisure, green space and transport etc. The regeneration and growth of the town will have a significant impact on the shape of the economy over the next 18 years and into the future.
- 3.1.2 The document will be used both internally and externally with our partners to target key priorities and projects so ensuring good communication and buy in with all key partners. The document includes an executive summary; it shows the current economic position of the Borough, the future aspiration and the actions to be taken to deliver this. It is broken down into easily understandable themes or chapters looking at the broad economy ensuring all building blocks to success are identified. The document has taken into consideration national and regional policy as well as local needs in its development.
- 3.1.3 The Council's Regeneration and Growth Department has been developing the strategy, working towards implementing this and working in partnership across the region with partners including:
- Local Strategic Partnership
 - West Northamptonshire Development Corporation,
 - Northamptonshire County Council,
 - Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited,
 - English Partnerships,
 - East Midlands Development Agency and
 - The University of Northampton.
- 3.1.4 The primary use of this document is to: -
- 1) Give leadership and direction to Northampton and bring forward cohesion to the priorities for the Northampton Economy.

- 2) Promote joint workings and understanding with key partners in delivering a long-term structured programme of work.
- 3) Provide corporate direction for NBC's and our partner's activities in Northampton.
- 4) Ensure clear priorities and objectives for deciding resources, including; financial, people and assets to deliver outcomes set in the strategy.

3.1.5 The Economic Regeneration Strategy addresses the community vision of creating a 21st century 'Market City' to live, work and invest in.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 This Economic Regeneration Strategy for Northampton is more than a vision and aims to give clear direction looking at local needs and regional strategies. The core of the document looks at:

- Strong leadership united around a shared vision.
- Investment in the knowledge city.
- Building on existing strengths.
- Developing and strengthening the Boroughs markets.
- Diversifying specialisation in the Borough's industries.
- Attracting and retaining high skills and skilled organisations.
- Promoting a vibrant education sector including higher education.
- A distinctive 'knowledge city' offer.
- Strong connectivity of transport and communication.
- Investing in communities and tackling social exclusion.

3.2.2 The MKSM growth agenda sets housing targets, taking current numbers at 88,000 with projections to increase to 120,500 by 2026. Associated to this the population is projected to increase from 200,000 to, up to 300,000. Regeneration of the town is needed to expand facilities and bring back character in a planned strategy.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 Do Nothing - The option to do nothing would not affect the number of planned houses as significant numbers of homes will continue to be delivered through commercial activity. Without a clear strategy the supporting town facilities will not be delivered in a co-ordinate and clearly planned way to ensure Northampton is an attractive place to live, work and invest. Opportunities presented from funders such as NEL, developer contributions or central government funding would not be spent in a co-ordinate way.

3.3.2 Adopt Strategy – The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy will give a co-ordinated plan for delivery based on local needs, regional and sub regional strategies and the LSP Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton.

3.3.3 Write an alternative document – If it was felt that the strategy it felt that is does not deliver the objective a new strategy could be written. The current strategy went out for a three-month consultation and has general agreement on the

targets. A new document would give a delay in concluding the direction that Northampton may wish to proceed and inputs would be needed in deciding the new direction.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The document is one of a suite of documents being developed by the Council to address regeneration and growth. Strategic direction is given in the Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy along with the Joint Core Strategy, Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton and Central Area Action Plan all currently evolving.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 It is not a statutory requirement but is essential in delivering planned and sustained regeneration and growth of Northampton.

The production of the written document has limited financial implications, as this is implemented by internal staff within approved budgets. The application of the strategy will however have major implications for the town as a whole but the long-term impact should be financially positive as investment into facilities, infrastructure and jobs are created from the proposed actions.

4.2.2 The initial implementation of the strategy will require up front investment by NBC and partners in planning and feasibility studies. This planning activity will need to be budgeted for to start the process and prove the case for major capital funding from developers and other government partners such as WNDC, NEL and EMDA.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 This strategy is not a legal requirement but demonstrates prudent planning and awareness of the economic challenges facing the Borough with a fully supported strategy.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 The document has been out for a three-month consultation that included consultation with community and diversity groups.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Partners met before the document went to consultation to discuss an earlier draft to help shape the Consultation Draft document. This included WNDC, NEL, NCC, EMDA and EP. From this document reviewed at the 1 October Cabinet, an extensive 3-month consultation has taken place from 8 October 2007 to 14 January 2008. 31 partner Organisations were consulted along with 1070 Businesses and 56 parish council / resident associations. The document was also available on the NBC web site to be filled in on line or down loaded, and the document was referenced on the observatory and Chamber of

Commerce web site. The document was distributed in the Grosvenor Centre for two days, as well as being presented at a business breakfast by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. From this, replies were received from 24 partner organisations, 8 businesses, 2 parish council / resident associations and 10 individuals.

- 4.5.2 The consultation asked people general questions on the document and what they would like to add on each chapter. It also asked people to rank each target on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. From these results, the average (median) reply was plotted to find if a majority of people agreed with each target or not. The results show that for all targets the majority either strongly agree or agreed with 33 strongly agreed targets and 26 generally agreed out of the total 59 targets.
- 4.5.3 These results were fed back to the Consultees in a public meeting on 29 January 2008 and the analysis of the result have also been put on the NBC web site.
- 4.5.4 The Draft Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy document has been changed in response to the comments and suggestions submitted during the 3 month consultation period. The main high level changes are:
- References to NBC in the document have been changed to refer to Partners. This is in response to the Chair of the LSP wanting the document to be adopted by the LSP and requiring it to therefore be focused towards partners.
 - All partners are listed on the front of the document. This will have to be confirmed with these partners before the final document is published.
 - The strategy now runs from 2008 to 2026 rather than 2007 to 2021. To align with the planning framework.
 - Statistics and tables through out the document have been revised with the most up to date figures.
 - 8 new Targets have been added. These are:
 - R9. Improved Building Frontages - Northampton's character is a key asset in promoting place making.
 - E15. Livestock Market - Support the Farmers' Consortium's campaign to re-open the Livestock Market.
 - B7. Innovation Space - Develop innovation space for business and engineering with the focus on Northampton's strengths and connections.
 - B8. Business Support – Business Link - Develop an onsite support hub for the evolving fledging business centres with advice.
 - H5. Refurbish existing estates - Housing expansion should not only focus on building new houses but should explore the potential of refurbishing poor existing housing estates
 - L4. Events Programme - Develop a programme of major events for the town, of local, regional or national significance.
 - L5. Town Trail - Develop a self-guided historic town trail of Northampton.
 - T9. Bus travel and modal shift - Ensure that a town Centre transport hub is part of a wider aim.

- Develop a South Northampton Railway Station – This target was rejected by NCC and WDC and was a barrier to making the whole strategy a partnering document that parties could sign up to. The consultation identified it as the least popular target in the document although a majority still agreed.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan sets out 5 main Priorities to be pursued over the next 3 years. One of these is that 'We will promote economic development and growth in Northampton'. This NBC corporate objective is the driving force in writing the Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy and in the future implementation of the strategy.
- 4.6.2 Northampton's Economic Regeneration Strategy takes its primary lead from local needs but also takes its guide from the East Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (RES), Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Northamptonshire Sub Regional Economic Strategy (SRES). These documents feed into the Local Area Agreement (LAA) that sets out specific targets. The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy does not aim to repeat these targets and objectives the strategy document but rather to give specific local achievable direction in areas of influence aiming to add value to the current overarching work.
- 4.6.3 The strategy will be the framework for delivering economic development, regeneration and growth of Northampton for NBC and our partners.

4.7 Other Implications

- 4.7.1 The Central Government Growth Agenda projects the number of houses in the town is set to increase from 88,000 to 120,500 by 2026. This projected increase in housing and associated growth in population gives an opportunity to regenerate the town and build on the successes that Northampton has to offer. From planned housing growth comes the increased demand for retail, jobs, leisure, green space and transport etc.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Cabinet paper - 1 October 2007
 Corporate Plan 2008 - 2011
 Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy
 Regional Economic Strategy
 Sub Regional Economic Strategy

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