NORTHAMPTON

'The Market City'

ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY

2008-2026

Working in partnership across the region with many organisations including:

Local Strategic Partnership
West Northamptonshire Development Corporation
Northamptonshire County Council
Northampton Borough Council
Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited
English Partnerships
East Midlands Development Agency and
The University of Northampton

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Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy 2007 - 2026

Foreword

Northampton is about to change, a change driven by the need for significant numbers of new houses in the region and a desire to expand in a sustainable way to serve the current and future citizens of this emerging ‘‘Market City’’. This current opportunity arises with funding generated from growth. Northampton requires direction and vision to capture this opportunity.

Northampton is the largest town in the country with a population of 200,100 and sits at the heart of the biggest growth area outside London. The town has 88,000 houses with a further 32,500 to be built by 2026. The population is projected to expand up to 300,000 by 2026. Northampton’s current challenge is in making the growth transform the town into a balanced green and prosperous European ‘Market City’ for the 21st century. Currently the housing growth is leading the way in the transformation of the town but the heart of Northampton also needs dynamic growth from its streets, shops, leisure and economy. The opportunity is to make Northampton a sustainable city capitalising on its central location in the UK to attract business and residents with its distinct character, heritage and sporting legacy.

Northampton’s approach to accelerated growth requires a step change in the way things happen. There needs to be greater drive and partnership working to achieve the balanced results required.

Proactive intervention in Regeneration needs to go hand in hand with our exciting economic aspirations enabling Northampton to compete at a regional, national and international level.

Northampton’s Economic Regeneration Strategy sets out clear targets for the transformation of Northampton’s economy with a golden thread connecting regional to sub regional and local needs and plans. It is a Northampton Local Strategic Partnership document supported by the LSP board that brings public, private and voluntary sectors, together with sub-regional partners. The document went out to consultation for three months from October 2007 to January 2008 and as a result a set of planned target actions have been drawn up within this document bringing the strategy to life.

Some major steps have already been made with the creation of the award winning Upton housing development, brownfield initiative, flood alleviation work and in the major £200 million PFI transformation of our school system (led by the County Council).

Northampton needs to create a ‘Market City’ of opportunities and diversity, with an economic base to provide a climate for innovation, investment and encourage enterprise, allowing businesses to thrive.

Developing and promoting a highly skilled knowledge-driven workforce is also key in the development of Northampton and there needs to be the opportunity for all to train and then use these new skills in the local area to drive a dynamic economy.

The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy aims to give shared partnership direction for the town’s development, promoting and channelling energy to achieve agreed goals.

Executive Summary

Northampton: City for Investment

By 2021, Northampton will be a European city of vitality known for its distinct quality of life, history, culture and green living, enjoyed by all.

The Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy, West Northamptonshire Joint Local Development Scheme, the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) and NCC Transport Strategy for Growth will provide the strategic framework for the spatial development of Northampton. The Economic Regeneration Strategy identifies the key economic priorities and actions that are needed to move forward in a planned way.

Northampton's Economic Regeneration Strategy is a Northampton Local Strategic Partnership document supported by the LSP board taking its primary lead from local needs but also taking 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 Strategic Northamptonshire Economic Action Plan (SNEAP) is also a key document. The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy does not aim to repeat these targets and objectives in this document but rather give specific local achievable direction in areas of influence aiming to add value to the current overarching work.

The Strategy aspires to:-

- Create the right environment to attract diverse and entrepreneurial business to invest in Northampton
- Provide a focused framework to help secure public sector investment
- Promote a diverse and adaptable skilled workforce, stimulate ambition, and ensure that these people are retained in the Northampton economy.
- Develop Northampton's infrastructure including retail and leisure facilities to aspire to quality that aids the attractiveness of Northampton with amenities second to none.
- Enhance and promote the creative facilities, the unique historic character and niche retail offer in Northampton.
- Promote strong partnership working across all sectors for genuine commitment to the sustainable development of Northampton.

The vision for Northampton is to be a major regional and cultural economic centre with traditional architecture mixed with high quality new urban design creating city living. Northampton will have a cultural quarter, a riverside development, be known nationally as a centre for education, with diverse employment opportunities, excellent sustainable transport and a tourist destination of choice.

Northampton: the City to Live, Work and Invest in

The "city with a unique quality of life" is a central concept within the Economic Regeneration Strategy. By 2021 Northampton will be transformed into a prosperous and dynamic regional city with a growing knowledge based economy, distinguished by:

- Distinctive character historically, culturally and environmentally.
- Knowledge creation and retention with a nationally acclaimed university, with infrastructure aiding technology transfer and renowned studies.
- Good skills levels throughout the workforce.
- Cluster(s) of growing knowledge industries including creative, science and business quarters.
- Good connectivity with IT and transport links, including good cycle, bus and walking routes.
- Known for its high quality of life, expansive retail offer and diverse leisure activities.
- Effective local leadership (local government and other agencies).

Northampton's Assets

Northampton has significant assets not least its history stretching back over more than 800 years. Each generation adding a layer of activity and intrigue that is recorded in the physical make up if its buildings, industry and infrastructure.

These assets include the green infrastructure. Its beautiful parks and village greens hidden in suburbs of Northampton are gems that need to be preserved. New developments need to acknowledge the success of this green infrastructure, retaining an uplifting quality of life in the emerging green 'market city'.

Other items that give the place a distinct identity include, The Royal and Derngate Theatre and the town's Museums including the recently restored 78 Derngate designed by Charles Rennie Macintosh. The town also has many notable ancient churches including the round church of the Holy Sepulchre and All Saints Church in the town centre. Being a County Town it has an historic grand market square that can be seen on a map from the17th-century. The Northampton 'Saints' Rugby Club, Northampton Town Football Club, Northants Cricket also add a sporting sense of identity advertising the town to a wider audience. All of these assets and many more give the town character, a character that ensures a sense of place and a starting point for developing a new European city.

The Boot and Shoe industry in Northampton was aided by Northampton's central location in the country offering good connectivity to markets.

Today's cities succeed by offering proximity to people and their ideas (Glazer 2005) and this is still appropriate for Northampton when considering future plans. There are also opportunities to support and expand the towns existing businesses.

The growth agenda gives great pressure to ensure the housing expansion and associated projected population growth from 200,000 to 260,000 will also deliver the facilities required of a medium sized city.

Northampton has a growing education infrastructure and established specialisms in creative arts, business, healthcare, environment, waste management, leather technology and land management amongst others. The University of Northampton, Northampton College and Moulton College are key drivers for up-skilling the town's work force, adding to the expansion of Northampton's knowledge economy and a critical influence on the future economic prosperity.

The town and surrounding area also hosts many events and rallies such as the annual balloon festival, carnival, numerous steam rallies and a diverse range of sporting and cultural events all lending weight to Northampton's central location in the country.

The town is surrounded with historic houses and picturesque villages offering excellent quality of life. The aim is to bring this feeling of wealth into Northampton town.

Northampton's Challenges

Northampton must provide a more supportive culture for its business community to invest. It must improve its image, promoting its cultural assets and attractions as a place to live, work and invest.

Northampton also needs to regain its rightful place as the focus of the County and gain support from its infrastructure to develop a city economy.

Northampton's current economy is not as diverse as it could be, relying on too few sectors and tends to have lower skills levels.

The town is within a commutable distance to and from London and this creates opportunities and challenges. There are opportunities for companies to relocate to Northampton where land is cheaper and quality of life better, and challenges as many of the Borough's high earners commute to London for wider opportunities. This could be an opportunity to boost the local economy if more high knowledge skilled careers were available locally.

Northampton needs to raise its performance to become more competitive and diversify its economic base in order to raise incomes.

The Economic Regeneration Strategy

The Economic Regeneration Strategy for Northampton needs to promote a step change in the focus of regenerating and growing the town in a planned way.

The key to the development of the town centre is 'deliverability'. The CAAP will provide the Statutory planning framework to deliver change. Partners such as Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council hold significant land in the town and there is great potential for joint working with both private and public sector partners to get the most potential from these assets. The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy will have a long-term impact on the town, and actions are set for focusing delivery.

The focus being on:-

- Making Northampton a distinctive place, promoting its heritage, culture, natural environment and creating high quality places
- Developing retail, living and employment opportunities in the town centre
- Developing sustainable living, improving connectivity and access
- Promoting the knowledge economy

The Economic Regeneration Strategy will need to connect with Northampton's new Spatial Planning Vision. The overarching aim of the strategy is to achieve a significantly improved competitive position for Northampton and to transform it into a competitive, diversified, balanced and well-connected economy where strong leadership drives economic success and quality development.

The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy identifies ten critical development themes that need to be progressed to achieve a rounded transformation of the Northampton Economy.
These are broken down in the document into a set of ten subject headings expanded upon in the following chapters:

- Retail
- Industry/Employment
- Business start up
- Regeneration
- Education training and skills
- Community
- Housing
- Leisure / Sport
- Infrastructure
- Leadership

These themes are the building blocks of balanced economic performance in all cities and will become Northampton's focus for success.

Proactive Interventions

The Focus of the Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy develops these themes into a set of actions, targets and standards. The most important ideas promoted by the Strategy are:

- Expand the retail offer in the town centre
- Develop niche markets
- Develop Market Square as the centrepiece of the 'new city'
- Improve the public realm especially Abington Street
- Protect our green infrastructure, parks and greens and add similar spaces to the new 'Market City' as it expands
- Promote the creative sectors of the town to retain students, add character and provide creativity to the town's growth
- Promote availability of land for key industry sectors for Northampton including consultancy, headquarters of companies, knowledge based industry and a Technology Realm

- Develop the leisure offer
- Develop a branding and marketing strategy
- Promote good carbon management
- Promote quality affordable housing
- Be receptive to initiatives and ideas that promote Northampton expanding economy

Cutting across all of these themes is quality and stimulating ambition. The community strategy highlighted that development should deliver cleaner, safer and greener communities. Quality is a critical factor to ensure schemes deliver longevity rather than short term wins with long-term problems and well considered design is key.

INTRODUCTION

The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy is a Northampton Local Strategic Partnership document supported by the LSP board that aims to provide an agreed direction for Northampton's Future. The regeneration and growth of the current town will have a significant impact on the shape of the economy over the next 15 years and into the foreseeable future. The town has a partnership of regional delivery agents to implement all aspects of the strategy. These partners include:

Local Strategic Partnership
West Northamptonshire Development Corporation
Northamptonshire County Council
Northampton Borough Council
Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited
English Partnerships
East Midlands Development Agency and
The University of Northampton

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 working and understanding with key partners in delivering a long-term structured programme of work.

3) Provide corporate direction for Partner's activities and complement the strategic planning process.

4) Ensure clear priorities and objective for resources, including; financial, people and assets to deliver the agreed strategy.

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

The aim of the strategy is to turn Northampton into a European city with ambition, thriving from morning to night whilst being safer, cleaner and healthier. With the expanding economy it will develop a sense of place and excitement, grown from an evolving cultural quarter, fully utilised European exemplar market square, expanded retail offer and wealth of learning, living and employment opportunities. Skills will need to be improved, driving to achieve a knowledge led economy, retaining students within Northampton.

The 'market city' will be modelled on Northampton's traditional street patterns, differentiating it from its neighbours through niche shopping, arts, culture and fashion (especially shoes) all of which give Northampton a distinct identity. Northampton will offer a mix of historic architecture and the best new urban design offering a variety of homes to appeal to a broad market from city living, bespoke waterfront development to treasured village greens.
All building work will aim to be of excellent environmental and quality standards, promoting the existing parks and village greens and adding to this in the expanding city. The city will also have a sustainable transport, cycling, walking network and wealth of well-maintained leisure facilities that create interest and intrigue. This will include a new landmark swimming leisure complex that reflects Northampton's distance from the sea but provides outstanding inland water based facility for all ages.
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 physical ‘knowledge city’
- Building on existing strengths
- Diversifying the Borough’s industries
- Attracting, retaining and developing 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

The Central Government Growth Agenda gives Northampton greater opportunity than most towns in the UK. The number of houses in the town is set to increase from 88,000 to 111,500 by 2021. 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.

Northampton Borough Council’s Corporate Plan sets out five main objectives to be achieved over the next four years. One of these is ‘***To promote economic development and growth in Northampton’***. This NBC corporate priority is the driving force in writing the Economic Regeneration Strategy and to be a key partner in its subsequent implementation.

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 Strategic Northamptonshire Economic Action Plan (SNEAP) is also a key document. The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy does not aim to repeat these targets and objectives in this document but rather give specific local achievable direction in areas of influence aiming to add value to the current overarching work.

This strategy is primarily driven around living in, working in, and developing the town centre. A major factor is greatly increased retail demand from the growth of the town and the opportunity to significantly enhance the shopping offer in the town centre. There is land available in the town centre to create this opportunity from surface car parks etc. The design of the new retail offer needs to be outstanding to create a **‘wow factor’** that differentiates Northampton from other local offers, drawing people into the town centre through quality landmark developments. The current historic character of the town needs to be promoted and niche markets created. The aim is to offer outstanding retail, leisure and investment opportunities, matched with new desirable houses, making it prosperous, progressive and promoted.

Expansion is not a new concept for Northampton as the town was designated a new town in the 1960’s and saw dramatic growth through the 1970’s and 1980’s increasing the housing numbers by 20,000 with 42 miles of new roads, 10 million square feet of new office or factory space, 10 community centres, 10 local shopping centres and over 20 schools, at a capital cost at the time of some £200 million.

The current growth target of 31,500 new houses (2001 to 21) is far greater than the town has ever seen. The expansion is already happening. The greatest danger to the town is that this is left to market forces to drive forward, developing housing and retail opportunities where the land is cheapest and building of a low quality giving maximum returns for the investor but very little added-value to the citizens of Northampton and the economy. If out-of-town centres are developed there is a risk that the town centre will decline, eventually forcing current anchor tenants to quit the town on a downward spiral. (Ref. CACI Northampton Retail Strategy Report 2008)

Northampton has the opportunity to develop in a controlled way and the local development framework will provide a clear Masterplan of the town and surrounding region but it must have the support of all of its local authority agents and citizens. A piecemeal approach will give a half-hearted result reflecting in poor architecture and a less desirable place to work, live and invest.

A further significant element to the Economic Regeneration Strategy is the development of the public realm with consistent design principals aimed at reflecting the character of the town. This is extremely important to give the town the long-term desirability to invest and live in. This document aims to evaluate the main areas of the Northampton economy looking at:-

- Retail
- Industry/Employment
- Business start-up
- Regeneration
- Education / Training and Skills
- Community
- Housing
- Leisure / Sport
- Infrastructure
- Leadership

These ‘focus areas’ of the economy have been selected to ensure a rounded view of the economy is considered. Some important subjects such as skills are covered across several subject areas.

The report briefly looks at Northampton’s current economy and gives a focus on the future achievements identifying specific targets. Some of these targets are research projects to gain further information before taking action. The ‘targets’ are detailed in a table in the appendices.
A key to the development of the town centre is deliverability. This is enhanced due to the significant land holdings owned by the Borough Council and the County Council with the ability to explore the potential opportunities for joint working with both private and public sector partners. The results of this work will give rise to further targets. The strategy will have a long-term impact on the town; however, longer-term actions will need to be reviewed as work progresses and further detailed targets set. The focus is still envisaged to be:-

- Making Northampton a distinctive, ambitious and vibrant place, promoting its heritage and creating buildings of quality
- Developing retail, living and employment opportunities in the town centre
- Developing sustainable living, improving connectivity and access
- Promoting the knowledge economy

RETAIL

Current - Retail

Northampton as Northamptonshire's county town and an important market town currently has a fairly average retail offer but considering it is the largest town in the country the offer should be much better. Most of the top 20 high street retailers are present in the town but the size and level of the stores is disappointing.

Northampton has a total of 518 town centre retailers covering a total floor space of 123,000 sq m and retail warehousing of 131,000 sq m, making the out of town shopping larger than the town centre retail floor space. (ref Property Market Review 2006 CBRE).

The high level of retail warehousing is a major threat to the 'health' of Northampton town centre. A recent survey conducted by CBRE, 'Fashioning a Shopping Experience', shows that the average shopper now has a preference for out of town location due to the availability of free parking and larger shops. A further threat to Northampton town centre is the improvement of 'competing centres' in the area, that have the potential to attract local shoppers to those centres rather than shopping in Northampton. Current figures (2006) show that 18% of residents in the south of the Borough shop in Milton Keynes rather than Northampton.

The CBRE Northampton Retail & Leisure Needs Analysis Version 5 August 2006 looked at the capacity for new retail in the town categorising the shopping experience as Convenience goods (supermarkets) and Comparison goods (clothes, shoes, fashion etc). The results below show a considerable opportunity in comparison goods as follows:-

	Forecast capacity for new shop floorspace		
Retail type	**2006**	**2011**	**2016**
Convenience Goods in Town	**1,890 sq m**	**2,450 sq m**	**3,080 sq m**
Convenience Goods out of Town	**4,390 sq m**	**6,080 sq m**	**8,560 sq m**
Comparison Goods	**21,350 sq m**	**53,400 sq m**	**86,300 sq m**

When CBRE looked at Comparison Goods it was noted that Northampton town centre would be able to achieve higher market share with a major new town centre development taking into consideration the expanding population. The projected expansion of comparison goods in the town centre would represent a two-thirds increase in capacity. If the extension of the Grosvenor Centre provided an additional 50,000 sq m of space then this could equate to 2,500 new jobs.

The report also identifies the opportunity for another major supermarket within the town centre. This demand will be strengthened with the expansion of residential space in the Town centre.

Future - Retail

Desirable

High street shopping has experienced a change as food retail has moved to the edge of town to 'local' centres as is reflected in Northampton. Town centre shopping has moved from being a necessity to being a leisure activity where attractiveness of product is key to sales. The internet also has a significant impact on the way people shop; Multi media and books are major items that are now bought online taking about 16% of this market share. Clothes shopping only has 2% internet sales but this may not be the case in the future as more catalogues go computerised. The Town centre needs to offer something special to attract people in. The aim of the retailer is to promote a strong brand making the product desirable. To successfully achieve this, not only does the product need to be as desirable as possible, but so do the surroundings making the whole experience a pleasure to be repeated.

To this end the architecture of the centre needs to reflect this aspiration to achieve a memorable leisure activity that promotes return visits.

The challenge for Northampton is to construct a retail offer that can meet the demands for an expanding town and be as beautiful as possible to inspire the economy and promote the town as a desirable place to live and work.

Functional

A second consideration is the long-term functionality of the town centre. The design needs to be flexible and adaptable enough to incorporate changes of life style. One such change being the potential for shopping on the Internet and impact to the future retail offer.

It is difficult to plan for future changes but history shows that some shopping complexes have not stood the test of time as the original perceived beauty becomes ‘old fashioned’ and dysfunctional.

Market Forces

The increase in population and potential to enhance the shopping capacity are key to the future success and functionality of the town. Developing the town centre is a necessity to ensure that there is a draw to attract current and future citizens. The greatest danger is that retail expansion is left to market forces to drive forward development with out-of-town retail opportunities being pursued where the land is cheapest and building of a low quality giving maximum returns for the investor but very little added value to the citizens of Northampton. In this negative scenario, it is possible that out of town centres will over shadow the town centre often making it a ghost town, eventually forcing current anchor tenants to quit the town.

The Transition Period

Another consideration is the transition period from old to new ensuring the existing town centre traders do not go bankrupt during construction as shoppers desert an unattractive, dusty, noisy centre for more attractive alternatives. To this end, Abington Street needs to be uplifted before a new centre is developed to ensure the town remains attractive to shoppers.

Niche Markets

The town needs to distinguish itself from the surrounding towns and their offers. Milton Keynes has a very successful undercover shopping experience and it would be difficult to compete with this offer directly. Northampton has a history that stretches back over a thousand years that has left a legacy of buildings and historic streetscapes. There is an opportunity to work with this historic landscape to create a distinctive and attractive retail environment. An option to consider for the Northampton offer is, either a number of Leeds style airy open Victorian glass shopping precincts or, open air Chester styled tiered walk ways with lots of specialist shops in pleasant pedestrian areas so aiming for market segmentation and niche markets.

The Market Square

The market square with its daily market is historically the main focus of Northampton and can be seen on very early maps of the town. It remains the heart of the town and is central to projecting a vision of the future for the whole town centre. Currently the large market square hosts a market most days of the week with two thirds of the square having fixed stalls which restricts alternative use. The market square appears to have great potential as a flexible space with all of the permanent stalls removed. This has been demonstrated by the success of the French market, with the ability to attract larger crowds for a one-off event. Markets could be held selling goods from variety of stall types so aiding flexibility of the space. The market could have a dedicated event's organiser staging everything from; car launches and trade fairs to concerts and big screen sporting events such as the Olympics. Designs could include a floor level fountain enabling small children to play there on hot summer days and with the jets turned off the area remains a flat functional space. (ref - Sheffield Peace Gardens).

Further research and consultation with partners and stakeholders is needed before the right decision is made.

Targets - Retail

R1. Niche Markets
Develop vibrant Niche markets to distinguish Northampton Town Centre from other Retail Centres making it an attractive place to shop and promoting the history and character of the town.

R2. Expand the Town Centre Retail
Increase the town centre retail offer by two-thirds i.e. 80,000m^2. To make Northampton a major competing retail centre it needs to expand and develop the Northampton offer. The aim is to make the town centre the number one choice for the town and surrounding catchment area. This will be achieved primarily through commercial alliances with either existing or new partners.

R3. Consult on Retail Design
The quality and longevity of the shopping experience needs to instil a sense of pride in the town gaining popular public support. The town centre needs to promote quality, reflecting Northampton's character, exploring niche markets and retail growth.
A consultative exercise and choice of designs could be given to aid the debate and consolidate the preferred choice with the Town's citizens.

R4. Increase Jobs/Skills and opportunity
The expansion of the retail area will bring significant employment opportunities which should be taken up by local people skilled / trained to realise the opportunity. Geographically these opportunities are next to areas of the town with high levels of deprivation giving good opportunity to skill or re-skill people to work in the expanding retail sector. (There is a need to work with the Learning and Skills Council to ensure that training is delivered to local citizens to be able to realise the opportunities in the expanding retail sector.)

R5. Market Square
The market has great potential as a flexible space retaining the function of the market during the day and transforming into an events/social space in the evening.

R6 Evening Economy
The current evening economy has a bias towards a young pub culture. The town should look at developing a diversified offer to appeal to a wider audience including Cafes, restaurants and family friendly venues.

R7. Landscaping/Public Realm

Landscaping major circulation areas of the town is already recognised as important. A major redevelopment of the route from the railway station into the town centre is being developed. This initiative needs to be continued, in particular improving Abington Street, which is looking tired. This needs to be carried out before there is major building works and interruption of the current Grosvenor Centre.

The town needs to work hard at protecting its existing businesses and making their surrounding area more attractive.

R8. Business Improvement Districts (BIDS)

There is potential for a retail area to be improved/maintained through the creation of Business Improvement Districts. A 'BID' being a partnership between the local Authority and the resident business in the designated area. By charging a levy on the rates within the BID area, added value can be achieved by putting improvements and additional services into the area. Through this initiative others such as the Northampton Retail Crime Initiative (NRCI) can also be supported.

R9. Improved Building Frontages

Northampton's character is a key asset in promoting place making. A programme of improvements to existing shop frontages to complement the often fine architecture at 1st floor level could be undertaken. This programme should start in the Market Square and expand to other streets in the town and potentially extending down the Kettering Road and Wellingborough Road.

INDUSTRY/ EMPLOYMENT

Current – Industry, Employment

Although Northampton has a relatively vibrant economy that has led to a healthy and expanding property market for employment space, this is led by strategic warehousing with a decline in manufacturing. Most of the new development is on green field sites adjacent to the M1 motorway. This change in employment could be viewed as a dumbing down of the quality of jobs in the area as fewer highly skilled engineering workers and professionals are needed whilst the distribution industry requirements are land hungry but offer fewer skilled jobs.

The town centre employment space is reducing and stock is aged. Demand for general industrial and office accommodation is principally from local and regionally based companies seeking relatively small units, i.e. offices up to 700 sq m and general industrial up to 2,000 sq m. Supplies of office space in the town are significantly below the national average.

Northampton's current industry is a product of its historic connection with industry and geographically it's central location in England making the town a good location for business and in particular strategic warehousing. The main industries can be summed up as:-

• Environmental Technical • High Performance engineering • Food & Drink • Leather • Print & Publishing • Construction • Education	• Professional Services • Logistics • Financial Services • ICT • Public Sector • Sport

Some of these sectors rely on one or two major employers, such as banking and financial, whilst others have a spread of smaller companies such as the shoe industry.
The larger employers in the town are as follows:

Employer	Sector	Employees
Barclaycard	Banking / Finance	2,000-4,999
Nationwide Building Society	Banking / Finance	2,000-4,999
Northamptonshire County Council	Other Services	2,000-4,999
Northampton General Hospital	Other Services	2,000-4,999
St Andrews Hospital	Other Services	1,500-2,000
Northampton Borough Council	Other Services	1,500-2,000
Intelligent Processing Solutions	Banking / Finance	1,500-2,000
Travis Perkins	Manufacturing	999-1,500
University of Northampton	Education	999-1,500
Avon Cosmetics	Manufacturing	500-999
Barclays Bank	Banking / Finance	500-999
Carlsberg UK Ltd	Manufacturing	500-999
KAB Seating	Manufacturing	500-999
National Grid	Service Industry	500-999
Uniq Prepared Foods	Manufacturing	500-999

Northampton's Current and Projected Employment

The Northampton Employment Land Study (completed July 2006) takes the MKSM 37,200 jobs growth target figure and aggregates this geographically between authorities to conclude a target of 27,600 jobs in Northampton Borough. Although crude, it does give a basis to review projected employment figures in 2021 compared to 2001; as detailed below.

	2001 (Jobs)	2021 (Jobs)	Change 2001-21	% Change 2001-21	% Change 2001-04
Agriculture etc	100	100	0	0%	-1%
Mining & Quarrying	200	100	-100	-50%	-35%
Manufacturing	17,100	13,300	-3,800	-22%	-6%
Construction	12,700	14,600	2,100	16%	0%
Wholesale	9,100	10,900	1,800	20%	8%
Retail	12,500	15,000	2,500	20%	8%
Hotels & Catering	5,700	5,000	-700	-12%	-2%
Transport & Communications	8,600	10,200	1,600	20%	20%
Fin. & Business Services	39,200	58,000	18,800	48%	1%
Public Admin, Education & Health	31,700	36,400	4,700	15%	15%
Other Services	5,300	6,100	800	15%	5%
Total	**142,300**	**169,900**	**27,600**	**19%**	**6%**

(Ref - Northampton Employment Land Study July 2006)

Note the final column shows that the Borough's total employment grew by 6% per year in the period 2001 to 2004. If a target of 27,600 jobs is to be achieved up to 2021 then a lower growth rate of 1.3% per year could be acceptable although these might not be targeted knowledge industry/professional jobs.

There will be losses as well as gains in all sectors over the projected time period. Some areas such as retail may be understated when the expansion of the town centre retail is taken into account. Hotel facilities in the town are also currently poor and this may result in an increase rather than the projected decrease.

Employment Floorspace

The 2007 figures from Northampton Observatory identify a total floor space stock in Northampton of 2,923,000 sq m split as follows :-

- Office (15%).
- Factory floor space (29%)
- Warehousing (56%),

Northampton's *employment floor space* is concentrated on a few large estates on the outskirts of the town whilst the much of the *office* stock is still located in the centre of town. In the period 2001-05 Northampton had net 5% gain in floor space, mainly attributed to warehousing, whilst the East Midlands region saw virtually no growth in employment floor space over the same period.

The changes in Northampton were :-

- Offices remained static
- Factory floor space fell by 66,000sq m
- Very large growth of distribution warehouses

Offices - Current town centre office stock is estimated at approximately 434,000 sq m. The office space in the town is older and of a lower quality than average across the UK with only 7.1% regarded as new i.e. completed since 1999. It is also predominantly in smaller sized units. All major deals have been in out of town locations in recent years, such as National

Grid Transco taking space at the former Scottish and Newcastle headquarters in Lakeside Business Park.

Office availability (vacancy) in Northampton is currently at 8.1%, a figure that is significantly below the UK average of 12 – 13%. This suggests there would be demand but availability of development land is limited in comparison to Northampton's neighbours.
The office market in Northampton is characterised by :-

- Demand for modern open plan accommodation
- Limited to smaller/medium sized local companies looking to expand
- Popular size band is therefore up to 700sq m
- Significant new office stock is now located out of town, close to major routes and access to the M1

General Industrial/Small Distribution - Demand for large manufacturing sites has fallen significantly aided by the closure of such manufacturing sites as British Timken and Avon (although the Avon office headquarters remains in Northampton). Only limited manufacturing is left. The majority of accommodation suitable for general industrial/small distribution space is located on relatively modern industrial estates, e.g. Lodge Farm, Moulton Park, Round Spinney and Brackmills.

Projected demand is from locally based companies in units of up to 2,000 sq m. Current values within Northampton for modern units up to 20,000 sq ft are £5,50 per sq ft per annum, which is in line with East and South Midlands. There is a shortage of land and buildings available to accommodate this sector of the market seeking modern units up to 20,000 sq ft.

High precision engineering remains a strong sector with companies such as Mercedes developing a substantial £50million research facility in Brixworth, just outside the Northampton Boundary.

Strategic Distribution – The distribution sector has been one of the key drivers of the economy in central England within the last decade. The demand for large strategic distribution facilities continues unabated.
Northampton is within an area known as the 'Golden Triangle' for distribution because of its strategically central location. If a planning policy decision was taken to provide land for strategic distribution in excess of the forecast demand, a significant amount of such land could be taken up while current market conditions last.

<u>Projected Demand for Employment Land</u>
The average occupancy density of employment land spaces is :-

- Office Space - 18sq m per worker.
- General Industrial Space/manufacturing - 35sq m per worker.
- Strategic Distribution Space - 88sq m per worker.

Taking the projected job demands and average occupancy density levels gives the following demand for employment land in Northampton 2001 to 2021 :-

- Offices - 85 ha
- General industrial - 33 ha (i.e. a reduction in use).
- Strategic distribution - 77 ha

The Northampton Employment Land Study also produced an alternative demand estimate, based on more intensive use of land, and in this alternative estimate, Northampton's office demand for 2001-21 falls to 63 ha, but plot ratio as high as 80% (ie more building and less landscaping) would only be viable on town centre sites.

Future - Industry / Employment

Office Space

The demand for office space is predicted to increase. If left to market forces development will be in out of town locations near to motorway/major road networks with easy car parking. It is however vital to develop office space in the town centre as workers would be more inclined to shop, eat and socialise in the town during the day and in the evening so boosting the Northampton economy. There are a number of new living accommodation opportunities also being developed in the town centre which could encourage a live work culture in the town centre, cutting down the car journeys in and out of the town freeing up the roads. This is an important concept that should be strongly encouraged and planned for including the development of such sites as Castle Station and along the river.

Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council own some land holdings in the town centre that could be utilised for office development to encourage the local economy. This is particularly true when looking at the surface car parks in the town (Ref. Chapter on Infrastructure). They hold the key not only to office but retail and other use and these could be rationalised into a number of multi-storey car parks freeing up land.

Looking at the advantage of Northampton's central location and the desire to attract high knowledge industry, the opportunity to attract consultant head offices and/or regional offices needs to be explored. These could be located in prestigious gateway offices in the town or, if size dictates, could be a series of larger offices on routes into the town.

Manufacturing

The decline in manufacturing is a national trend rather than a regional or local trend. The main driver has been that goods can be manufactured abroad and the finished item shipped back to the UK, at lower cost than local manufacture. This is primarily due to the use of cheap labour producing high volume whilst being able to maintain good quality standards.

Although it is desirable to increase the manufacturing base in Northampton, market trends and reports suggest that labour intensive high volume sectors will continue to decline. The aim should be to encourage stability in the remaining manufacturing industry in the town including the high performance engineering and high value leather industry. Diversification and niche markets are an answer where price is not the main driver.

One area that could see expansion is the recycling industry. There is a growing opportunity to recycle materials in the UK and Northampton is well located to take advantage of this. The University are already investigating this subject and have a SITA library on recycling based at the University of Northampton.

Strategic Warehousing

Strategic Warehousing plays a major part in Northampton. The industry is land hungry and needs to be managed and planned to ensure the right opportunities are available, ensuring that higher density higher skilled job opportunities are not lost from weak planning decisions. Existing estates also need better management acknowledging Northampton's strategic geographic location in the road network and propensity for long haul lorries to stop in Northampton Borough. In estates where overall estate management is not co-ordinated there is a need to set up Business Improvement Districts to address poor crime statistics and general estate management issues.

Marketing

Once new employment land has been identified a targeted marketing campaign will be needed. The regional strategy is to promote relocation of business into the area and to promote expansion of existing industry, the campaign would also identify and target key growth sectors and public sector bodies relocating from London and the South East (Ref. Lyons Review). The East Midland Development Agency (EMDA) and Northamptonshire

Enterprise Limited (NEL) funds are available to aid this and they would be lead partners. Others would need to contribute.

Overseas Opportunities
In partnership with the university there may be an opportunity to explore overseas markets/business that wish to locate in the UK and see whether the strategic fit that Northampton can offer now and in the future would appeal to them. The University and NEL may be able to help identify these opportunities. EMDA are keen to see engagement with expanding economies especially China, Russia, India and Korea. These and opportunities in Europe can be explored.

Targets - Industry / Employment

To review the strategic use of NBC land to develop office space and other opportunities within Northampton and in particular the Town centre.

E1. Promote the Development of Office Space
The aim is to promote living and working in the town centre, reduce journeys and boost the spend in the local economy. To further this there is a desire to promote the increased use of office space in the town centre balanced with housing to ensure the town has an attractive offer in the town centre.

E2. NBC / NCC Land Holding
Review of NBC/NCC land holding with projected reuse of land for commercial opportunities and social enterprise. (This point needs to be carried out in relation to the car parking strategy undertaken ref infrastructure section of this report)

E3. Create Office Site Opportunities – land Assembly
There is currently a shortage of easily accessible development land in and around town centre. To help stimulate the renaissance in the town there is a need to clear and create marketable land /building footprints for office/ employment opportunities.

E4. Promote High Quality Jobs
Market led growth will lead to warehouse and distribution taking major land opportunities in out of town locations in preference to higher density employment. A proactive strategy is needed to correct this promoting the use of out of town areas for high quality jobs with higher density land use in preference to land hungry distribution. (It is acknowledge that not all employment growth opportunities can be accommodated in the town centre)

E5. Identify Gateway Sites
Promoting a high quality environment is important to increase the desirability of the town to investors. To this end there is a need for developing 'gateway' building projects that can house prestigious firms in high quality buildings that can be seen when entering the town.

E6. Proactive Targeting of Companies to Relocate in Northampton
With visible improvements in the town centre and identifiable sites in and out of the town there will be a need to proactively target firms to locate in Northampton. Target industries include:

Consultancy
Recycling/ recovery/ sustainable emerging technology
High Value Manufacturing/ Transport Equipment
Construction
Health/ Healthcare
Food and Drink
Overseas industry looking for a UK base

E7. Development Opportunities PPP / JVC

Evolving from the identification of sites for development and the clearing of sites to give a clear footprint, will come opportunities for partners to develop the building of office space in the town centre. As well as promoting economic activity in the town, these opportunities should also result in a one off payment or in receiving a long-term income to be reinvested in the process.

These opportunities will need to be worked out on a case-by-case basis balancing risk and return (current and future) that each opportunity presents. If these opportunities are numerous then a suite of legal documents could be developed to aid the process.

E8. Increased Skills and Training

To up-skill the workforce/local community in preparation for the new employment opportunities. This should be done in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council and education establishments.

A good example of this is the promotion of apprenticeships in the building trade and training local people for positions in the planned expanded retail sector.

E9. Small to Medium Enterprises – SMEs

Aim to reduce the business rates to start up business in the first two years to enable Northampton to be a centre of innovation creating growing business.

E10.Industrial Growth Space

Northamptonshire is the centre of manufacturing for key industries including motor sport and shoes. These and other industries need to be promoted to ensure development and growth space is available in the expanding town.

E11.Conference/Exhibition Centre

As identified in the leisure section of the report, Northampton's central location is naturally good for holding rallies and events with people travelling from all areas of the UK. This suggests there is an opportunity for locating a conference /exhibition centre in or around the town.

E12. Local procurement

Encourage local procurement to support the local economy and help reduce procurement miles so aiding the environment. Fairtrade produce should be promoted to ensure the towns status as a Fairtrade town and supporting developing economies.

E13. Management of Industrial Parks

Support needs to be given to ensure that industrial parks are given the right facilities including better safety and proper long haul parking/facilities. With the potential for the provision of a secure lorry park for Northampton and improved facilities, security cameras supported through Business Improvements Districts.

E14. Science and Technology Park – 'Technology Realm'

Support needs to be given to ensure that Northampton provides a Science, Business and Technology Park creating a Technology Realm. The project will provide the 'hub' of a major hub and 'spoke' Business Park throughout Northamptonshire. The project will promote Knowledge based jobs and improve skills..

E15. Livestock Market

Support the Farmers' Consortium's campaign to re-open the Livestock Market, the Strategy would both support job creation and employment diversity.

BUSINESS START UP

Delivery of Business Support
Business Link, NEL and The University of Northampton support programmes for general business start up. In addition to this support two commercial organisations offer general managed workspace for small / medium business.

Business Link is the main provider of advice and support to Small to Medium Size Enterprises (SME). The Business Link function has been franchised out to local delivery agents working under the national brand of Business Link. In Northamptonshire the pre-start and Business start-up support has been awarded to the University of Northampton.

The University have also championed a separate initiative to support creative industries with an innovation / incubation centre on the University's Avenue Campus. This is currently under going a major expansion.

Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited (NEL) is the economic facilitator for the County and an important partner in business support. They are aimed at relocating and growing current business in Northamptonshire but are also the Sub-regional Strategic Partnership (SSP) for EMDA on business investment and contributes to the set up and running of the Portfolio Innovation Centre run by the University.

Statistics
Northampton has 34.27 businesses per 1,000 population taking the population as 200,100 this gives 6,857 business located in the Borough. The average business size is 16.4 people. The new business formation rate is 11.42% but to counter balance this the closure rate is 10.58%. This works out at 783 new businesses in 2006 and 725 businesses closed. 6.76% of businesses are self-employed. The 36-month survival rate is approximately 65%. These statistics do not take account of the people that engaged business link or other business advisory services that did not eventually put into action their plans.

The UK figures show a similar picture with 37.52 businesses per population, start-ups at 10.08% closures 9.94% and 36-month survival rates at approximately 65%.

Justification for Promoting Business Start Up
Enterprise culture and business creation are vital for regional development (ref - EMDA Business Birth Rate Consultation Document 21 April 2006). They list the four key justifications for providing public funds to support business start-ups as being:-

1. Return on public investment – research (Allenton 2005) indicates that there is a good return on investment.

2. Opportunity – new businesses generate at least 20% of the growth in the regions productivity and generate a large proportion of new employment opportunities. In addition they provide a source of innovation.

3. Need – Self-employment is the best or only viable prospect of economic inclusion for some groups. Increasing economic inclusion and added social benefits.

4. Market support – market failures associated with business start up are greater than for any other area of business support and need initial promotion to survive.

Enterprise skills need to be mainstreamed into education and skills development. The group that tends to generate the greatest number and most profitable start-ups are 35 to 55 year old skilled employees. A Small Business Service ‘household survey’ measuring the number the number of people considering starting a business within the East Midlands shows that this has been static at 10% since 2001.

The Regional Economic Strategy for the East Midlands 2006-2020

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) sets out the following targets for start up and survival.

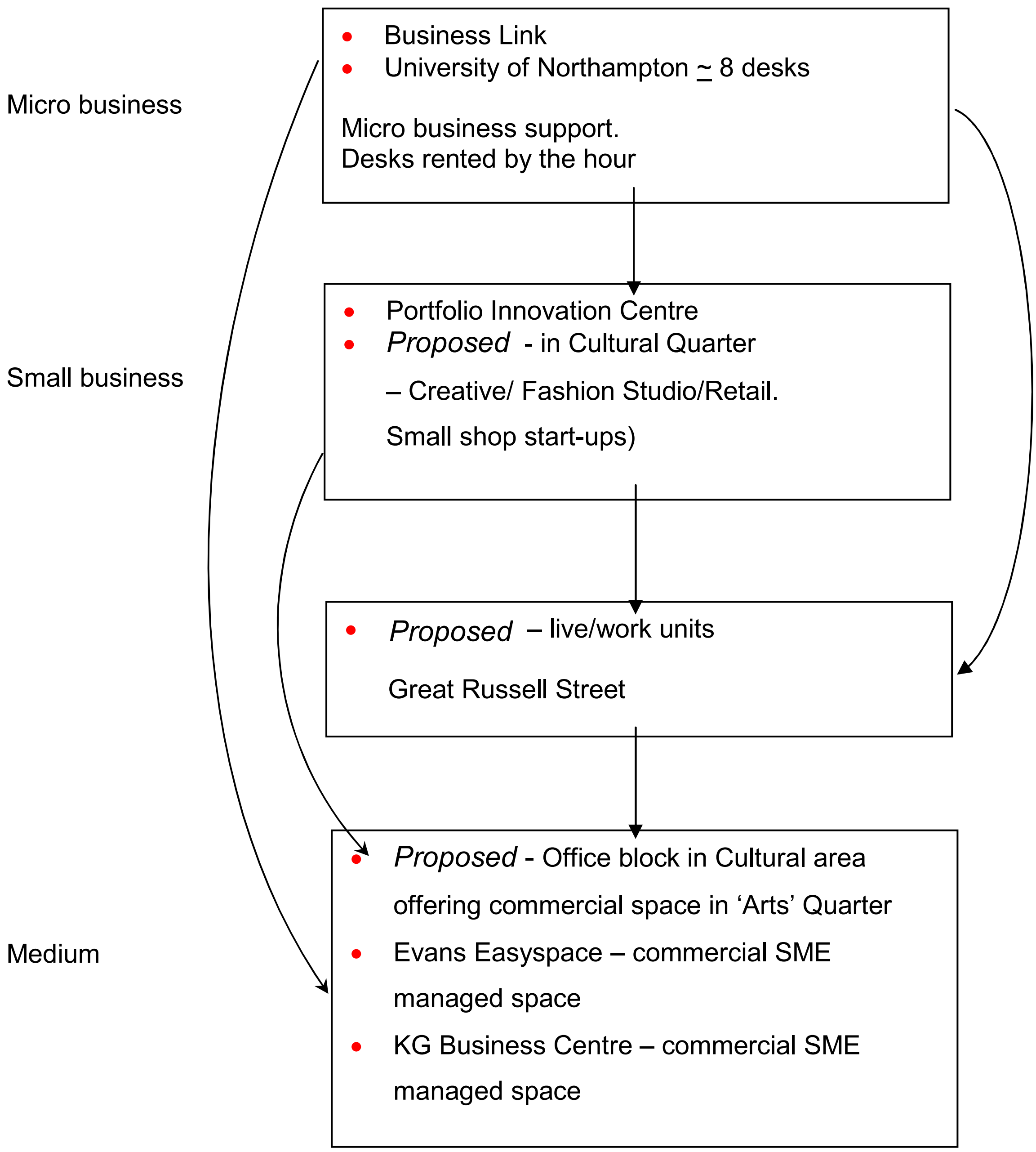
i) Increase the rate of VAT registrations to 40 per 10,000 population in line with national average by 2009.

ii) Maintain the 3 year survival rate at 71% by 2009.

iii) Identify opportunities focusing on 35 to 55 year olds, especially women and encourage them to overcome their identified risk aversion to start up business.

iv) Provide quality advice on setting up businesses.

Business Start Up units in Northampton



Student Retention in Northampton

The courses offered by the University of Northampton and Northampton College give an insight into the expertise and skills that can be offered in the town (ref the chapter on education). The University's key expertise includes craft/art/design, leather technology, lift technology (especially lift certification), health and recycling. The University house the SITA Library on recycling information. They also have a business school that is keen to engage with local partners and businesses. 1,879 students graduated in 2007 of which approximately 333 are arts/creative graduates. 436 are business graduates and 111 are studying applied science.

Courses at the University are not fully aligned to the industry within Northampton. The industries do not rely on highly skilled people for the bulk of their workforce and the university produces more graduates than the market in Northampton can employ. The University has a new aim of targeting small to medium enterprises, which is not the traditional employer of graduates. It has also been noted in several reports that the town has a difficulty in retaining its students because the town does not offer graduates the social, retail and lifestyle that they demand. The housing is not affordable and jobs are limited.

From a graduate retention survey made by The University of Northampton the following observations were made;

> *Amongst students there is considerable agreement about what they did not like about the county. Both groups highlight "poor cross country transport links" and "unattractive, rundown, dirty urban environments". However whilst current students highlight their "fear of crime", those who had graduated mention a "lack of civic spirit" as a principal dissatisfaction.*
>
> *The majority of students suggest that they do not expect to stay in the county on graduation and two-thirds of recent graduates have already moved away. This trend represents a considerable skills leakage.*
>
> *Principal reasons for moving away from Northamptonshire, especially among non-Northamptonshire based students, include "being nearer to family friends", "never intended to stay" and "cannot afford to live independently". Few of these students, less than one-in-eight, had a job lined up prior to graduation. These factors suggest that student debt is a prime mover for departure – without a job and with a negative bank balance students have little choice but to return home.*

It can be seen that there were limited opportunities and Northampton was not attractive enough to give them the desire to stay.

<u>Small Business Start-Ups</u>

The type and nature of the current start-ups in Northampton is as expected diverse, but tends to focus on sole trades, crafts men/women and traditional small business. A recent list of businesses set up in Northampton aided by the University show that out of the 110 start up businesses listed, 10% are retail. Generally, retail will include small speciality shops that have to commit to long lease on premises that have to be paid even if the business fails. A three or even ten-year lease without get out clauses can be a major barrier to starting a business.

Creative Industries

The BDP report (October 06) and the Scott Wilson report (November 04) both identify the need to develop the creative industries and cultural offer in the town. This would also connect with the creative graduates from the University and Moulton College and connect with the creative start up businesses at the Portfolio Innovation Centre.

The creative industries in Northamptonshire in 2005 comprise of at least 1,500 companies and small businesses. These employ more than 10,000 people and produce a total turnover of some £729 million in the local economy.

This sector represents 7.7% of the total of VAT enterprises in the county. It employs 4.2% of the total of employment of all enterprises, and generates 3% of the total turnover of enterprises in the county.

In addition between four and five hundred very small businesses and individual practitioners produce an estimated additional £10 million turnover.

The creative industries sector includes a wide range of different kinds of activities, and there is a wide range of differences between them. Businesses in the audio-visual and fashion categories in the county tend to be larger, employing on average more than 35 people, all the other sectors apart from publishing averaging less than five. Software and computer games generate the highest total turnover at £235 million, radio and television the lowest at just over £3 million.

Employment in Northamptonshire fell by 42% in creative industries, principally due to the drastic reduction in the fashion sector over the period 1997 to 2005, with more than 8,000 jobs lost, mostly in footwear. This is against the national trend, which has seen employment in the creative sector grow at a rate of 3% per annum, compared to 1% for the whole of the economy. The reason for the decline is specific to Northampton with many shoe manufacturers moving or facing competition with countries offering lower wages and cheaper production costs.

Northamptonshire has about a 12-13% share of the creative industries sector in the region. Compared to its population of 15% of the region's total, the county is underperforming in this sector compared to other parts of the region. (Ref - Creative Industries in Northamptonshire 2005 A study for Creative Connections by Fred Brookes and François Matarasso December 2005)

Creative Northants, as a county wide organisation, supports locally-based arts initiatives some of the elements of its strategy include:-

- Growth and development of a diverse ecology of arts and creative industries enterprises, in the commercial, public and third sectors, using business support networks and expertise;
- Advocacy for the arts in the sphere of growth, regeneration and economic development;
- Nurture and incubation of new and emerging arts projects, organisations and enterprises, providing a unique opportunity to develop;

The Identified Need

The need to aid business start up and small to medium size enterprise (SME) as discussed above can be summarised by the following points:

- The RES identifies that enterprise culture and business creation are vital for regional development.
- Northampton statistically starts up fewer businesses per head of population than the national average.
- The RES aims to aid the removal of the risks associated with business start up, with targets set to increasing the rate of business start-ups.
- University students especially Art/creative graduates do not find related employment in the town and tend to leave.
- Students do not find Northampton an attractive place to stay and work
- The university produces more graduates than the market in Northampton can accommodate.
- A gap has also been identified in the development of social enterprise ie: not for profit ‘industry’ that promotes quality of life and social inclusion.
- The BDP report (Oct 06) and the Scott Wilson report (Nov 04) both identify the need to develop the creative industries and cultural offer in the town.
- Attracting high skill high value jobs will provide more jobs for graduates.

Future – Business Start-Up

Targets – Business Start-Up

Several specific start-up or small enterprises can be added in the retail development of the town and/or in the cultural area.

These include;

- **Bespoke shops**

Start-up shop businesses hit a major barrier to entry to the market when faced with taking on a 10-year shop lease without break clauses. If the business fails this lease then typically needs to be sold on. New businesses also face a difficulty in needing to break even in the first few years whilst establishing a firm customer base from a standing start. To reduce costs many of these businesses are located in unfavourable areas for trading with restricted passing trade. More prominent locations attract higher rents and rates. By creating an area of the town with small units for rent by start-up business with good passing trade would aid diversity of the town’s retail offer and aid the business start-up survival rate. If enough small shops were located in the same area this grouping would create a destination. They have the potential of sharing overheads and the complex could have a trust to manage the units as a not-for-profit landlord.

B1. Sole Trades/Start Up Business

Developing an area of the town centre for sole trades/ start up business shops to aid start up and create a more diverse shopping offer.
(This could potentially be in the evolving Cultural Quarter of the town or in St Giles Street and Gold Street).

- **Arts studio complex**

Aid the diversity that is currently lacking in the town and create employment opportunities for artists by setting up, a complex of managed studio space selling art works. Each unit would be a space that an artist could work and then sell their creations from. A similar set up can be seen in St Ives (Cornwall) where several artists are situated around a courtyard. To ensure that a sale is not lost, a central management and till function could be created at the exit. Students from the University could then find self-employment straight from graduation and aid the local economy or might attract more mature return graduates.

B2. Arts Complex/Start-Up Business

Develop an area of the town centre for an arts/creative complex supporting start-up and growth business/ studios/ shops to aid start-up and create a more diverse niche shopping offer and matching local graduate skills to employment opportunities in the town. (This could potentially be in the evolving Cultural Quarter of the Town)

- **Fashion Studio**

The idea of a collection of studios around a central courtyard could be rolled out to a second venue concentrating on fashion or craft designers providing not only artistic items but more practical items to wear or use aimed at a different segment of the shopping market. In the courtyard the central function could be selling coffee, newspapers, cakes etc. In Birmingham there is a complex called The Mailbox housing designer wear built in an old building with character. This could be of a similar style but use fashion designers from the University once again diversifying the towns shopping offer but also creating opportunity for different University graduates. The unique selling point would be the ability to see the designer's studio and meet the person that had made the items that are for sale.

B3. Fashion Design/Star- Up Business

Develop an area of the town centre for fashion design retail start-up business shops to aid start-up and create a more diverse shopping offer and matching local graduate skills to employment opportunities in the town.
(This could potentially be in the evolving Cultural Quarter of the town)

- **Antiques' Centre**

The history of the town creates Northampton's character that is reflected in the buildings. It is commented on in all of the regeneration studies of the town as being the town's main attraction but this is not reflected in the shops. There are several centres that sell antiques in the villages around Northampton but you would be hard pressed to find a shop in the town itself. There are opportunities to diversify the shopping offer within the town by creating an Antiques' Centre. By sharing the central overheads and reducing the unit to a small size there is potential to create a cluster of units and make it a destination rather than relying totally on market forces to make it happen. Unlike the designer start-ups this is a more commonly found proposal in historic towns. Further research is needed to be able to answer the question as to why an Antiques' Centre has not been set up in the Town.

B4. Antique Business Shops

Develop an area of the town centre for antique business, restorers, and shops to aid start-up and create a more diverse shopping offer.

- **Great Russell Street**

There may also be opportunities for development of live work units on a route from the University of Northampton (Avenue Campus) into the town. The area of terrace housing has traditionally been where the heart of the Northampton shoe industry was based.

Workers used to collect their work from a central supply workshop and take the material home to work in their cellars before returning the finished goods at the end of the week. The supply workshops still remain within the terrace housing but most do not now provide shoes. These buildings and proposed new ones could be used to locate either working units for a business start-up that needs to expand or for a live work set-up for a bespoke use. The units do not have good passing trade but would suit a business that would not need a shop front but is looking to expand from a one-person business to a small team.

B5. Live Work Units

Develop an area of the town for live work units start up business to aid start-up and create a more diverse work space.

Target dates:	***Research project***	***2008***
	Implement	***2009***

- **General**

All of the above clusters of segmented retail offers with specialist focus would benefit from a degree of subsidy to ensure that the start-up businesses are helped whilst their markets develop. There may also be a level of long-term subsidy needed dependent on the optimum number of units a cluster can reasonably support given certain market demand. It may be desirable to support these markets to give the town a degree of diversity that attracts a multiple of shoppers to the centre that would not have been attracted without these additions. It may be possible to support these clusters by developing an office complex that is owned by the same operating trust that runs the centres/studios. The rent from the office complex would give a form of endowment for the continued success of the units. The difficulty would be in finding funds for the office complex as well as the start-up units.

B6. Growth Space - Cultural Zone

There are many potential opportunities especially within the cultural zone of the town to explore the promotion of start-up and growth business.

There is a need to develop ‘business growth space’ as start-up business expands from such small beginning at facilities as The Portfolio Innovation Centre and elsewhere. Rather than lose these businesses, growth space needs to be created in Northampton. To house this in a shared unit would help overheads and create a shared sense of direction housed in a single office/studio complex in the Town.

B7. Innovation Space

Develop Innovation Space for business and engineering with focus on Northampton’s strengths and connections. This could include precision engineering and recycling and could be located on the University Park Campus or Northampton College sites.

B8. Business Support – Business Link

Develop an onsite support hub for the evolving fledging business centres with advice and training.

REGENERATION AND GROWTH

Current/Future

The Economic Regeneration Strategy has emerged from the opportunities provided in the MKSM growth agenda. The targets set throughout this document give rise to many regeneration projects.

The emphasis is on prioritisation of projects that will act as catalysts for levering private and public sector development. The town centre clearly should be the Council's top regeneration priority and the work in producing a vision for the Central Area used as the basis to identify critical actions and activities for the town centre. The report proposes key projects that should be brought forward now, as a priority, developed in line with the emerging Central Area Action Plan. An indicative high-level plan of the main actions and projects required over a 12 to 15 year period has been developed. It is imperative to demonstrate, to inward investors, that Northampton is working in Partnership to tackle its regeneration challenges and bringing forward key priority schemes.

In continuation of the successful partnership working that has already taken place and is ongoing, key delivery partners need to formalise an agreed methodology for joint delivery of major projects.

The key strategic objective of regeneration is to promote and support the key projects that will act as catalysts to investment and regeneration in Northampton to provide:-

- Improved and distinctive retail offer
- Required physical infrastructure
- Affordable housing
- Economic environment to attract quality employment and inward investment
- Sustainable communities
- Improve and develop a distinctive Leisure offer
- High quality public realm

These projects need to strive to deliver high quality architecture and sustainable buildings, taking into consideration potential existing and new landmark buildings and gateway architecture to add a sense of character.

The regeneration work to date has identified a wealth of regeneration opportunities through the Central Area Design, Development and Movement Framework prepared by BDP in 2006. This has formed the backdrop for regeneration activity in the central area by WNDC and Partners. The organisation and grouping of projects and programmes has created a project list that will be supported in the CAAP and includes:-

- A central area vision for the town centre.
- Grosvenor/Greyfriars retail expansion – the focal point for retail development and expansion.
- St Johns/County Hall/Angel Street Area – development of a cultural quarter and Civic Hub.
- Breathing Spaces – creating quality open space and public realm focussed on improving the areas of highest deprivation.
- Castle Station – major development of high quality office/employment.
- Public realm programme to create exceptional public realm:
    - Gold Street/Marefair
    - Market Square
    - Abington Street

  - Cultural Mile
  - The Cross
  - The Waterways
  - Approaches
  - Gateways
  - The Racecourse

- Great Russell Street – link the Town centre and the University with live work units.
- Development of the Mounts Car Park.
- St Peter's Area – Three projects in close proximity –

  - Freeschool Street – mixed use/office development expanding quality of town centre
  - St Peter's Way – mixed use along riverside
  - St Peter's Square car park – retail development, potential food store and multi-storey car park

- Bridge Street/Waterfront – expansion of social uses and opening up mixed use (emphasis on office) adjacent to river.

Of these Town centre projects it is proposed that the Grosvenor/Greyfriars retail led scheme is the greatest priority due to the potential regeneration and economic impact on the town.

St Johns Cultural Quarter, and Gold Street/Marefair Public Realm form the initial priorities on the basis of deliverability in terms of land ownership and funding since they are clearly central to the regeneration needs of the Town centre and are ongoing.

The following projects have been identified as Key regeneration projects outside of the Town centre.

- <u>Northampton Brownfield Initiative (NBI)</u>
  (Ransome Road, Sixfields, Harvey Reeves Road) – development of reclaimed brownfield land.
- <u>Upton</u>
  Sustainable residential development in SW Northampton.
- <u>Nene Valley Country Park</u>
  Provision of quality riverside recreation facilities and nature reserves.
- <u>Dallington Grange</u>
  Residential development of up to 3500 homes with local centre in NW Northampton.
- <u>General Hospital</u>
  Private Finance Initiative redevelopment of the general hospital.
- <u>Major Infrastructure</u>
  A major leisure facility is needed. Roads and services are required for the expanding town and other enabling projects including long-term car parking. Further infrastructure needs are being identified in a number of emerging studies and will give a focus on infrastructure priorities.

The current regeneration budget and resources mean that all partners need to work pooling resources to achieve the envisaged regeneration including NBCCLG, NBC, NCC, EP, NEL, The University of Northampton and WNDC. These resources include Grant Funding, land, human resources and statutory powers that combined give considerable potential.

The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy aims to promote the significant increase in size and quality of the town centre retail to make the town more dynamic to live work and invest in. The increasing of the retail sector is therefore the key regeneration project and needs to be a landmark project adding character to the town and creating a major interest from people wanting to visit the town. This energy will in turn spark the economy into activity.

To make the development happen in a structured way the town's infrastructure needs to be clearly planned and put in place enabling unfettered development to take place. As already referred to, the car parks and the way they are utilised play a major part of the key to unlock this development potential.

A wider approach is also needed of the whole Borough mapping major infrastructure needs to be led by the spatial strategy. This will identify the need and capacity for projects such as the northern link road. There is potential to computer-map the town to give a preview of how it will have evolved at a chosen time in the future. This tool will help the public visualise how developments fit within the town, so promoting good consultation. The ability to achieve this computer-mapping of the Borough is dependent on resources.

The projects that are to be developed need to be planned against resources to understand how much can be achieved and at what rate the programme can be delivered. There is a danger of taking on too many projects without achieving any if resources are not focused.

Government departments have generally adopted the OGC Gateway Principle of Evaluation of Projects. This methodology requires appraisal of, the need, options and benefits of a particular project be identified at an early stage of development to ensure that the right project solution is developed for a particular need. It demonstrates good practice for developing a project from first principles but will also give a firm basis for applying for government funding when needed, as these will be the questions asked when applying for funding.

Targets – Regeneration and Growth

G1. Planning and Resource Schedule

To establish an over arching master plan for delivery of the regeneration of Northampton in line with the Local Development Framework. This will need to be revised as development evolves (on an annual basis) and include resource scheduling to back up the delivery programme. The plan will also need to identify the lead partner of each particular element.

G2. OGC Gateway

Adopt the OGC Gateway method of developing projects from first principles to establish good practice. Projects should be developed through establishing the need, identifying the issues to be address by the project and identifying the options for delivery.

G3. Design Quality

Ensure all projects are built of a good quality, functional design, environmentally friendly (with environmental ratings) and be attractive. Designs also need to include the principles of designing out crime, specifically building to accredited 'Secured by Design' standards, including for example future counter terrorism standards for large retail developments. To achieve these standards, the delivery partners should adopt a policy of consulting before designs are concluded, with groups such as CABE or Regeneration East Midlands, the LSP, the police, and other emergency services, with the aim of trying to ensure design with longevity, serviceability, good spatial planning and place shaping.

G4. Public Consultation on Designs

The first major project that will create a landmark is likely to be the Town centre Grosvenor / Greyfriars retail project. Later major schemes are likely to be the redevelopment of the railway station including major office space and a major leisure project. To raise awareness of these major projects the designs should be part of a public consultation and potentially a design competition as this would help engage the public in the development of the town and advertise the new scheme development to the world.

G5. Equalities

The partners take their equality duties seriously and have a clear commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination and harassment as an employer and as a service provider and that this includes when procuring goods and services. Each project needs to be screened at the early development stage and progressively through the project stages to ensure that equalities are considered.

G6. Carbon Neutral Future

Actions need to be taken to reverse climate change. New developments and industry need to aim to be carbon neutral. This is in line with the Nottingham Declaration committing all sectors of the community to adapt to the impact of climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make public our commitment to action. Projects need to consider:

Carbon cost,
Zero carbon targets by 2016,
Sustainable sourcing of materials,
Water resource management, and
Minimising the impact and enhancing the local environment.

These and other environmental considerations need to be strongly defined and designed into any development.

General targets have been set in the Regeneration and Growth section of this document however specific projects are set as targets in other sections of the document as follows:-

- Retail - shopping expansion, redevelopment of Abington Street.
- Leisure - major leisure complex - cultural quarter.
- Infrastructure - development of the railway station, development of multi storey car parks to free up NBC surface car park land for development.
- Industry employment-development of surplus surface car parking for office use, conference centre.

Education, Training and Skills

Current - Education, Training and Skills

The future of the Northampton economy is a product of its citizens and their resources. Underlying this are the educational results that they achieve in schools, colleges and University that feed into the economy over a longer period. There is also a secondary factor of retaining students in the Town after qualifying, so contributing to the knowledge base of the community.

Northampton Qualifications 2006

Northampton is below standard for attaining educational qualifications in some areas with 16.3% of people in the town having no qualifications compared with 13.7% in England (ref Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics 2006). The table below shows that qualifications in Northampton are mixed in comparison with England as a whole, with slightly higher numbers of people with GCSE 'O' levels but fewer people with 'A' Levels or a degree than the national average.

Educational Qualifications in Northampton (Working age population)

	Northampton	South Northants	Northamptonshire	England
All people aged 16 – 74	124.5k	53.8k	401.9k	30,682k
% With highest qualification is a First **degree** (or equivalent) (ONS 2006)	17.5%	24.5%	17.8%	19.5%
% with higher education below degree level (ONS 2006)	11.2%	13.8%	10.4%	7.9%
% With highest qualification GCSE **'A' levels** (or equivalent) (ONS 2006)	20.6%	24.9%	22.5%	22.8%
% of the population whose highest qualification is **GCSE's Grade A to C** (or equivalent) (ONS 2006)	25.7%	23.6%	25.7%	23.3%
% with **no qualifications** (ONS 2006)	16.3%	9.2%	13.6%	13.7%
% with **other qualifications** (ONS 2006)	8.7%	4.1%	10,1%	12.9%
% of young people (16 -24 year olds) in full time education or employment (2003/4)	82.80%	92.40%	N/A	84.82%

Schools

Current School results show Northampton has a below average GCSE (grade A to C) achievement compared with the national average (ref - the table below) however, a few high achieving schools and a contrasting number of low achieving schools mask the true result. Many of the town's school results are below the 2006 national average of 57% for the achievement of 5 or more GCSE grade A to C passes with 5 Northampton schools having results at or below 40%.

The results also appear to reflect a lower level of degree qualified people in the town and potential 'human capital' the town can offer to business / industry.

The trend in the county and in the country shows an overall improvement in GCSE results as below:

% of pupils passing 5 or more GCSEs grade A to C

Area	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Northamptonshire	47.8	48.7	50.6	51.3	51.0	51.9	54.5
East Midlands	0	47.5	49.2	50.6	50.9	52.5	55.1
England	49.2	50.0	51.5	52.9	53.7	56.3	57.0

It is important to note that school results not only drive Northampton's future economy but also is a key factor in trying to attract firms to locate in the town. Northampton will need to sell the town as a desirable place to live, work, play, and educate to Industry and business employers looking to relocate their operation. .

The school infrastructure has recently achieved a major capital investment with the town's education system switching from a three-tier system to a two-tier system in 2004. Middle schools were shut and lower and upper schools have changed into primary and secondary schools. This change has been facilitated by a major £200 million PFI capital investment scheme across the town with a total of 59 schools being involved.

This is extremely positive for Northampton as almost all of the schools will have new facilities and many will have completely new school buildings equipped for the 21st century.

Colleges and University

Northampton is well catered for in education establishments and includes The University of Northampton, Northampton College and Moulton College just outside the Borough boundary.

The educational establishments are one of the key drivers in the Northampton economy. The colleges focus on vocational courses and have a clear role in skilling and up-skilling the Northampton work force.

The University of Northampton achieved full university status in 2005, granting it research degree awarding powers. It can now award PhD's and research degrees.

The table below shows the numbers and qualifications of graduates that pass though the University last year and shows the skills that the University could feed into the Northampton Economy although many of these find employment outside the Borough:

University of Northampton Graduates (full and part time)

	Degrees Awarded	
	2006	**2007**
School of the Arts	308	333
School of Applied Sciences	97	111
School of Education	230	268
School of Health	191	280
Northampton Business School	360	436
School of Social Sciences	352	428
Partner Colleges – Moulton	33	23
TOTAL	**1571**	**1879**

Information provided by : Information & Planning Unit, University of Northampton.
Taken from Achievement Summary AQSC Report – Tracking Good Degrees

Occupation

The graph below shows the type of occupations in Northampton in comparison to regional and national percentages. There are lower percentages of professional and technical people and higher levels of personal service occupations. There are also higher levels of elementary (unskilled) people.

	Occupation % of population (Annual Population Survey July 06-June 07)	**Northampton**	**Northampton shire**	**South Northants**	**England**
1	Managers and senior officials	18.7	16.7	19.5	15.6
2	Professional occupations	8.9	10.2	16	13.1
3	Associate professional and tech occupations	13.3	13.8	15.5	14.3
4	Administrative and secretarial occupations	9	10.3	6.7	12
5	Skilled trades occupations	9	10.5	12.3	10.8
6	Personal service occupations	8.2	6.6	6.2	7.9
7	Sales and customer service occupations	6.5	6.2	6.4	7.6
8	Process plant and machine operatives	9.3	9.4	7.9	7.1
9	Elementary occupations	17	16	9.5	11.3

The occupation and the qualifications table both reflect similar trends, with fewer professionals and less degree qualifications than the national average and higher than national average lower skills and low qualifications. There is a 4.2% difference between the Northampton and England column for Professional occupations (above). This 4.2% represents approximately 5,300 short fall of professionals against the national average. In comparison, approximately 1,900 students graduate from the University in any one year. Even if they all had the right skills for the market they would not address a rebalance in two years.
There is, however, a potential market in South Northants with professional and managerial that is above the national average percentage that suggests that some of these people could be found within a short commuting distance.

The school results are also reflected in the occupations in Northampton suggesting a potential lack of career aspirations, which may be reflected in the lack of career diversity and opportunity offered in the Town's current employment.

LSC

A key partner in 'up-skilling' Northampton's work force is the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). One initiative is, 'Train to Gain', designed to help businesses get the training they need to succeed. The service aims to help businesses improve their productivity and competitiveness by ensuring that staff have the right skills to do the best job. Northampton College and Moulton College have a clear role in aiding this up skilling of the Northampton workforce. The opportunity for significant building work within Northampton brings an opportunity for promoting builders to take on trade apprentices as part of the town's expansion giving a direct long-term boost to the economy.

Future Targets - Education, Training and Skills

Exciting improvements have already recently been made in the school infrastructure. The results of these dramatic changes need to be reflected in results.

Consultation on the growth agenda should include school organisations such as school councils, school heads, groups etc to inspire the future adult population in the design and development of the way the town looks. Design consultations need to engage students and schools pupils so that pride in the town inspires people to stay and develop the town.

NCC/Creative Northants have successfully worked on fashion design projects in schools that connect to the University. The projects get GCSE students to work on course work with university/industry in a fashion design exhibition competing for best design awards. The project engages school pupils into thinking about careers that can be followed through to university courses in Northampton and this type of thinking also needs to be encouraged.

The University's research and resulting intellectual property also gives great opportunities to be explored for the benefit of Northampton's Community though such initiatives as business start ups.

Retaining Students

There is a strong need to match University courses with local industry to ensure graduates find work within the local economy.

Ensure industry/business is encouraged to promote retention of current students to find employment in Northampton. (Note that the main volume of students that this applies to are creative students who currently tend to find work in London.)

Occupations

The employment by occupation shows that for a developing town there is a lack of professional/technical personnel in Northampton compared with the national average. This needs to be addressed if the skills base of the economy is going to support growth. This is especially true if the desired target growth is in knowledge based and professional industries rather than in lower skilled sectors. This can be addressed by both up-skilling the current workforce and by attracting the skills needed into the Town. If the workforce is to be up-skilled the timing of the arrival of new companies needs to coincide with the newly trained graduates because, as is currently happening, if these people do not find positions locally they are forced to leave the town to find work. The solution as above is to encourage the right type of industry to locate to the town and open up new employment opportunities.

Targets

Targets have not currently been set in this section but are to be developed through the Northampton Local Strategic Partnership. Targets will include the contribution schools colleges and the University could input and include how the town's growth could create opportunities for re-skilling adults, employability skills for those currently out of work, school diplomas, Knowledge transfer to local business, and community learning. Associated targets are also set in other sections of this report for training and skills as the subject cuts across all areas of the economy.

Community

Current - Community

The community/charitable/social sector of Northampton is not as easily summarised as say the industrial/business sector. Outputs are not easily defined in monetary terms but are diverse and give outputs such as community help, advice or provision of service. The economy benefits are through the increased well-being of its citizens and by adding diversity.

At a national level there are around half a million voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) in the UK ranging from small community groups to large national organisations. There is no definitive source of information on the total income of VCOS however the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) estimates that the 140 ‘general charities’ in the UK had a total income of £15.6 billion in 2000/01. This funding came from local authorities, the NHS, central government and other public bodies such as the national lottery. This shows that this is an important part of the economy. Social enterprise or not-for-profit business is driven by social objectives and forms an expanding part of the wider voluntary sector. It also adds to the richness of the economy. It can provide training and employment opportunities especially for excluded groups, build social capital and create wider social wealth. Northampton’s cultural diversity consists of:

- 91.6% White
- 1.7% Mixed heritage
- 2.4% Black
- 3.3% Asian
- 1.0% Chinese

Although all sectors of the community can benefit from VCOs, central government funding is often released to the most deprived areas of the UK and this enables more refined support to be developed. The main measurement of the social wealth of a community is through the government figures comparing levels of deprivation throughout the UK using ‘The Indices of Deprivation’.

Deprivation
The Indices of Deprivation is published every few years by the Government. In 1998 the emphasis was very much on viewing deprivation as a poverty measure. In 2000 the policy shift from measures of poverty towards issues of social exclusion.
The Social Exclusion Unit’s definition is:

‘Social exclusion is a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.’

The Indices of Deprivation released in 2007 enable better identification of pockets of deprivation. These areas are known as ‘Super Output Areas’. They give a clear picture of deprivation across the country and enable comparisons between Northampton and other conurbations. The statistics are also used by the Government to allocate funding to the most needy areas.

There are 129 ‘Super Output Areas’ in Northampton. The most recent figures (December 2007) show that within Northampton the most deprived 20% in the country on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) fall in the following Wards:-

Billing	Castle	Spencer
Delapre	Eastfield	Thorplands
Ecton Brook	Lumbertubs	
Old Duston	St David St James	

The most deprived SOA in Northampton is in Castle Ward and is the only one in Northamptonshire that falls within the worst 5% in the country. The least deprived SOA in Northampton is ranked 31426 on the IMD and falls within Weston ward.

Counting the number of people living in Super Output Areas that fall within the most deprived 20% in the country, it is surprising to find that 34,341 people in Northampton fall in these areas compared to 13,739 people in Corby. In fact this figure of 34,341 people in Northampton compares with a figure of 30,851 people for the rest of the county giving a clear picture that there is more deprivation in Northampton than in the rest of the county put together.

Structure & Initiatives

The Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) can be defined in three tiers. 1st tier organisations deliver direct services to the community. Their ability to perform is a product of their leadership, their finances, their internal set ups and systems / IT etc. 2nd tier organisations exist to help deliver support to 1st tier organisations, to build and improve capacity whilst 3rd tier organisations provide hubs of excellence and best practice for 2nd tier organisations. All of these levels exist in Northampton.

One key community structure is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) that engages the VCO sector in a wider forum along with Local Authorities and service providers. The partnership helps to engage the community and ensure delivery of future plans and services relating back to the community. These include the Local Area Agreement, LAA and Neighbourhood Management Schemes.

The Northampton Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

The Northampton Local Strategic Partnership was launched on 30 October 2001, and is a broad based partnership of local and regional organisations representing the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The group is non executive, having no direct powers but in bringing a broad range of partner organisations together, it gives the opportunity for different initiatives and services to support each other and work together to the benefit of the citizens of the town. It gives the opportunity for the issues of the town to be given one voice in a unified forum, maximising resources and opportunities. The LSP are a key partner in implementing this Economic Regeneration Strategy.

In 2002, the Northampton LSP published its Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton, setting out its ambitions. In 2008 the plan was updated to cover the period 2008 to 2001 with a longer tern vision up to 2021.

Northampton's Community Vision

The vision is adopted by LSP partners including NBC and aims for Northampton to be a place of pride, respect, excitement, vitality, fun and passion. The vision states that by 2011 the town will be:-

> **Safer -** People will use the city centre and move around all of Northampton at night without fear.
>
> **Cleaner -** All of Northampton will be clean and litter-free. We will work together to build a community culture of no tolerance of those who litter and pollute our streets.
>
> **Healthier -** Our green spaces, the streetscape and urban design will help to make the healthiest environment so that people have good physical and mental health and live longer.

Recognised for good quality, environmentally friendly housing - We will continue to promote good affordable, well-designed housing for all, with attention to the environment and the use of sustainable resources

Be well served by modern and efficient Public Service - Local councils will have defined their role as community leaders, working in partnership to deliver this vision for Northampton. Their decisions will be easy to understand, transparent and will involve local people.

By 2021 the vision is to be a place made up from caring communities and by 2031 it will be defined by its excellent transport system and be a major regional cultural and economic centre.

Northampton will be a centre for educational excellence – our schools will help develop good citizens and produce exceptional results. Our colleges and university will work with local businesses to develop and retain the jobs and workers of the future.

Our traditional architecture will be mixed with new urban design. The Cultural Mile will snake through the city, joined together by our integrated transport system. Included within the Cultural Mile will be a heritage trail that celebrates Northampton's boot and shoe past. We will take full advantage of all that the River Nene has to offer and develop a water-based experience for all ages. All of this, plus a specialist niche shopping experience like no other, makes Northampton a tourist destination of choice.

Local Area Agreement (LAA)

The Northampton Local Area Agreement is an agreement between Central Government, Local Government and partners designed to improve partnership and delivery of services for the public in Northampton.

The LAA gives a vision for Northamptonshire this being;

> *"Strengthen communities, deliver significant improvements in quality of life for people and provide equal life chance by working through purposeful partnerships that are grounded in a clear common performance framework."*

The Northamptonshire LAA sets out detailed performance targets for achieving the vision. These countywide targets are being revised into a new 2008 document. For an economic strategy to work, the benefits need to be received at all levels. This economic regeneration strategy does not intend to reiterate the initial targets but supports working in partnership to develop and achieve these and developing the new targets.

Neighbourhood Management Partnerships

An important emerging community resource is the Neighbourhood Management Partnership. The Borough has been split into 14 zones, 6 of which are currently developing neighbourhood management teams of wardens and officers aimed at identifying priorities, pooling resources and aiming to implement local area action plans.

Future - Community

The broad future aims are captured in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Northampton and some of the implementation is captured in the Local Area Agreement performance targets. The Neighbourhood Management Partnerships are working to implement these and other locally developed targets and initiatives. To ensure that the Community objectives become a reality there is a need to promote proactive intervention in Community Safety, Community cohesion and designing out crime.

At a detailed level it is clear that many voluntary, community and charitable sector groups support a wide variety of initiatives, all having an impact on the areas that they serve. Further objectives and initiatives are not therefore set as targets as these are developed through these communities. Some specific targets are set that could be developed which would enhance the current strategy.

Targets - Community

C1. Review the use of NBC Neighbourhood Centres
The Borough Council owns 22 community centres that provide or have the ability to provide direct service and facility to their community. There is an opportunity to review what they currently provide and how they could be developed including micro business start up.

C2. Establish Groundwork in Northampton
Groundwork is a federation of Trusts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, each working with their partners to improve the quality of the local environment, the lives of local people and the success of local businesses in areas in need of investment and support.
Each Groundwork Trust is a partnership of the public, private and voluntary sectors with its own board of trustees. Although North Northampton has a Groundwork Trust, it currently does not cover Northampton Town. Leicester Groundwork Trust is a good example of the type of facility that could be set up in Northampton with micro recycling business, community regeneration schemes and environmental schemes.
(With the aim of establishing Groundwork in Northampton, working in partnership with other environmental delivery organisations)

C3. Waste
The council needs to encourage re-use, reduce and recycle to lower the environmental impact.

C4. Safer Communities
All activities and plans need to take account of likely effects on levels of crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and behaviour adversely affecting the environment (Section 17 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, as amended). Developments need to 'design out crime' and potential problems as a principle, not only applying this to the construction but the way they are used, the accessibility of facilities and ability to build a sense of pride and 'ownership'.

C5. Neighbourhood Renewal and Neighbourhood Management
Investing in communities and tackling social exclusion is a key aim. Delivering the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy locally by narrowing the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the average, within Northampton there are 23 Super Output areas that are in the most deprived 20% in the country. The objective will be to have a lower level of worklessness, reduce crime, better health, improved skills, housing and physical environment.

HOUSING

Current - Housing

The Current mix of housing tenure for Northampton as recorded in the 2001 census is as follows:

Owned outright	19,989	25%
Mortgaged	37,601	47%
Shared Ownership	524	0.6%
Council owned	12,354	15%
Housing Association	2,313	3%
Private Landlord	5,663	7%
Rented other	2,378	3%
TOTAL	**80,822**	**100%**

It shows that 72% are owner occupied with the remaining 28% mainly rented. Current percentages are, however, not a true guide to the mix of needs for future housing.

Kate Barker's *Review of Housing Supply* (March 2004) analysed the problems with the supply of housing in England. In many parts of the country, house prices had increased rapidly, because the supply of housing has not kept up with demand. This is attributed to increased numbers of households caused by growth in the population and particularly the number of one-person households. It is projected there will be 209,000 more households overall per annum to 2026. The report identified that house prices over a 30 year period had risen by 2.4% per annum (1974 to 2004) and in order to deliver a revised trend in real house prices of 1.8 % per annum an additional 70,000 houses each year in England might be required. To bring the real price trend in line with the EU average of 1.1 per cent an extra 120,000 houses each year might be required.

The report also states that the Government should set out a goal for improved market affordability and introduction of a planning-gain supplement to capture some of the development gains that landowners benefit from, to ensure that local communities share in the value of development. To deliver the projected social housing, additional investment building-up to between £1.2 and £1.6 billion per annum will be required in England. The report also recomended that Local Authorities should be allowed to "keep" the council tax receipts from new housing developments for a period of time to provide incentives for growth and to meet transitional costs associated with development.

The findings of the Barker Review of Housing Supply Report are reflected in the targets set by Milton Keynes South Midland (MKMS) growth agenda. This has led to the main driving factor in Northampton's growth economy i.e. the target to build circa 30,000 new houses (MKSM figure 2001 to 2021). Northampton is familiar with growth and has faced a sustained period of expansion since 1960's. At the time of the Northampton Development Corporation from 1968 to 1985, a total of 20,000 new houses were built and since the 1960's Northampton's population has almost doubled to 200,100. The current house-building target will increase the number of houses from 88,000 to 111,500 by 2021 i.e. an increase of 39% in households. This rate of building is greater than the development of the New Town in the 70's and 80's and is greater than the town has ever seen over an extended period of time. To maintain the desirability of the town to invest and live, over a sustained period, these houses need to be of a good quality, functional design, well served and be attractive.

The Government has introduced environmental rating (Code for Sustainable Homes) to encourage sustainability. The lowest rating is zero and highest is 6. WNDC are aiming to ensure all new homes achieve a target rating of 3, which is broadly similar to a BRE's EcoHome Very Good. This should be encouraged in Northampton.

Not all of the projected number of houses for Northampton can fit within the current Northampton administrative boundary and would need to be within the wider West Northamptonshire conurbation ensuring the right housing type and tenure to match jobs need.

There is also a need for additional student accommodation in Northampton and with limited space on the university campuses there is potential to address this through an off site private sector initiative.

The Test of Time/Quality

Some of Northampton's properties built in the 70's and 80's have not passed the test of time and have now become less desirable. It has been recognised that existing problems were designed into these estates. This could include reasons such as; putting design before function, profit before quality, because ownership of common areas is unclear and resulting in poor maintenance or because large concentrations of social housing have been grouped together creating sink estates. In comparison many of the Victorian built terraced housing in the Town centre is still desirable and proved to be very adaptable for modern living having changed from having open fireplaces and outside toilets to new plumbing systems, heating systems, replacement windows and extensions etc. without losing functionality.

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

CABE has undertaken an audit of housing design in the UK and found, based on 293 schemes completed between 2001 and 2006 that 29% were rated as having poor design, 53% average and only 18% good or very good. In the East Midlands, this statistic was worse with 55% being poor, 42% being average and only 3% being good or very good. CABE found that the new builds failed to create a sense of place, failing to take advantage of the surroundings and local context. The designs generally failed to create identity and a distinct character. On a detailed level they had poorly structured layouts, lack of distinction between public and private realm and were difficult to navigate. CABE's audit went on to observe that the public realm had poor integrated car parking and public realm was poorly designed and maintained.

Demand

As the housing market is the key driver in the economic growth of Northampton as set in the MKSM Growth Agenda it is important that this growth is sustainable. The housing market is not easy to predict and predicting continued demand for these houses over long periods is similarly difficult. The main driver for building these new houses (as discussed above) is to reduce over-heating of the market and to ensure that there is a supply of houses for first-time buyers and social need.

The Barker report states that there has been an average 2.8% annual inflation rate in house prices over 30 years but in the middle of that period at the end of the 1980's the housing market crashed due to several factors.

Inflation and interest rates rose very dramatically and unemployment rose at the same time causing people to default on their mortgage repayments. Inflated house prices made flats and starter houses unaffordable for first time buyers. This slowing down of the market also restricted the ability for second time buyers to move on. The result was the housing market crash of 1989 as house prices fell, leaving some homeowners in negative equity. The current market is showing some similar signs with high house prices and rising inflation. The Barker report identifies that affordability is a national issue and by increasing supply will help resolve demand.

The West Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2007 (DTZ) suggests that 2,320 to 2,645 houses will be built each year for the next 15 years. In the wider West Northamptonshire (Northampton Borough, Daventry District and South Northamptonshire) area this equates to between 34,800 to 39,675 new houses. The current use of the housing stock in Northampton is a complex picture with some single households occupying properties with 2 or more bedrooms. Whilst at the other end of the housing market, there are currently 170 households housed in temporary accommodation (West Northamptonshire), the report states that this high number of people in temporary accommodation is an unequivocal indicator of a shortfall of affordable housing provision in the area.

Affordable Housing

The B. Line report Northampton Housing Market and Needs Estimate (Nov. 2006) states that across Northampton there is a need for new supply of 'Affordable Housing' of around 1,000 units per annum over a five year period. This equates to 50% of the total Northampton's annual growth target of 2,000 new houses per year. 'Affordable Housing' being defined as including *'Social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.'* Over the last 10 years there has been a reduction of 2,260 social rented units in the West Northants area. The Housing Market Assessment Report 2007 concludes that West Northamptonshire needs as much additional affordable housing as it can realistically secure. This target build level is seen as being 35% affordable housing on new housing development sites.

Another sign that supply is not meeting demand is the fact that between 2002 and 2004 the rise in lower quartile prices (34%) was far greater than the rise in lower quartile incomes (6%), resulting in a decline in affordability over the period. The Government has tried to look at alternatives to social rented and part ownership of housing by challenging designers to design a £60,000 house. The results look promising and may well provide a solution to a section of the housing market. The final price of the product, however, is likely to be greater due to the land price, profit and contributions required via S106 agreements. There could also be problems if delivered solely on a commercial basis as the market indicates that they could sell for more than this basic delivery price and may contribute to increase builders' profits rather than reduce house prices.

Average House Prices

The average house price in Northampton in January 2008 is £187,927 whist the average wage is £23,072. This would make the average house 8.15 times the average wage.
If a current mortgage rate of 5.25% is taken and applied to a £187,927 mortgage repayments would be 43% of the average wage. In London the average house price in is £303,739 (January 2008). By comparing the Northampton to the London price it can be seen that by moving to Northampton a saving of £115,812 could be made. This might well suggest that similar to the previous New Town expansion that economics might dictate that many of Northampton's new properties might sell to buyers from the SouthEast who will then commute to London if local jobs are not provided. Too much commuting is a threat to the creation of a sustainable community and highlights the need to create local jobs.

Future - Housing

The housing stock built now in Northampton will set the fortunes of the town for many years to come. To create a vibrant economy the type, style and character for the houses needs to be desirable and reflect the town's aspirations of economic prosperity. In commerce highly skilled staff are attracted to quality buildings because of the perceived prestige. Similarly there is an aspiration to raise the knowledge level of the work force in Northampton and a contributory factor in this is to build attractive houses to attract people to the town.

Attractive housing does not have to cost more. The aim of the governments £60,000 affordable house competition was to show the commercial house building industry that houses do not have to be bland to be affordable. It should therefore be the aim of the Borough to ensure that influence is used to achieve good quality homes.

Targets - Housing

Northampton Borough Council's Housing Strategy 2006-2011 "Enabling and Delivering Housing Choice" supports the provision of well maintained, affordable and environmentally sustainable homes of all tenure in Northampton by promoting the following strategic priorities:-

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Create sustainable communities
- Improve the housing service
- Provide support to the most vulnerable people
- Meet the decent homes standard

Comprehensive targets for delivering the Housing Strategy 2006 to 2011 are published in that document. This document does not intend to set further targets but highlights some of those actions, which include:

H1. New Homes – provide better quality homes and places to live

Support the completion of 1450 new homes annually 2006 to 2011 by maximising inward investment and by working with all our partners to plan for growth. (Ref. action 1.3 in the Housing Strategy)
(Note; It is acknowledged that land used for residential in the town centre may give a short term higher return than commercial use but to ensure all elements of the economy are working, it is also highly desirable to utilise town centre land for jobs as well as houses. Jobs will stimulate and add balance the town centre economy and give longer-term gains)

H2. Sustainable Affordable Housing – provide better quality and access

Widen the opportunity to home ownership and improve the quantity, quality and choice of rented accommodation. Targeting 35% affordable housing on all housing development sites. (Ref. also action 1.2in the Housing Strategy)
(Note ; The proportion of affordable housing should not be zoned but integrated into the overall strategic plan to ensure community integration and avoiding future sink estates.)

H3. Quality Houses

Northampton's houses are the future assets that attract workers to move to the town. Hence quality is of major importance. Ensuring houses are built of a good quality, functional design, environmentally friendly (with environmental ratings) and be attractive is essential. Plans also need to take account of spatial planning to integrate housing with transport connections, community infrastructure and employment opportunities. To achieve this Partners should adopt a policy of consulting before designs are concluded, with groups such as CABE, Regeneration East Midlands, Building Research Establishment and The Princes Foundation with the aim of trying to ensure design with longevity and serviceability.

H4. Encouraging Houses Builders

With Northampton Central location in England and the trend for house building there is an opportunity to encourage house builders to locate their operations in Northampton. The Regional Economic Strategy promotes construction jobs in the East Midlands and the MKSM growth projections provide a good opportunity to achieve this goal.

H5. Refurbish existing estates

Housing expansion should not only focus on building new houses but should explore the potential of refurbishing existing poorly designed housing estates. In these estates increasing densities could be explored as a mechanism for renewal where the existing landscape and density is working against, rather than in harmony, with the estate.

LEISURE

Current - Leisure

For Northampton to be attractive for investment it also needs to be a desirable place to live and play as well as work. The environment and the facilities that Northampton can offer are key to making the town desirable to investors and developers. Landmark buildings help give a place a sense of identity and offer a focal point. If the building also offers a facility for use by the public then it can serve two purposes. Similarly, if a town can offer good leisure facilities it will be a more desirable place in which to invest rather than a town lacking these facilities.

Northampton has a premier rugby club, football club and a cricket club that give the town and its hinterland a sense of identity and pride. It is unusual for a town to have quality teams covering three main sports. Silverstone just outside Northampton is also significant with the Formula 1 Grand Prix. These help promote the town and also give the town different leisure activities to watch throughout the year. Having local sports teams also promotes the desire in the town to participate in these sports as local players are seen to have attended local schools and now play in the teams competing at national and international level. There are opportunities to build on these activities by developing sports related business and sports related leisure industry, such as a sports injury therapy centre.

Outdoor Sports Facilities

The provision of good open space is also supported by the promotion of successful local sports teams. The ‘Open Space Sports and Recreation’ (OSSR) report (Sept 2006) by PMP makes many detailed recommendations on open space improvement, management and development. These recommendations are in relation to outdoor sports facilities and include the dual use of school playing fields for sport and the potential development of synthetic pitches.

Indoor Sports Facilities

The PMP Open Space report also briefly reviews the indoor sports facilities currently provided in Northampton relating to three areas:-

- Sports halls,
- Swimming pools and
- Health and fitness studios.

Provision of indoor leisure is not a statutory requirement but the Borough Council is the main operator of these facilities in the town and has a major opportunity to improve the town.

Sports Halls

The report estimates the supply and demand of sports halls by looking at the capacity for badminton courts and applies accepted sports participation rate standard to the Northampton population to conclude that in 2005 the demand was for 57 courts. Current supply in the town is 37 courts giving a shortfall of 20 courts.

Given that a sport’s hall usually houses 4 courts this gives a current shortfall of 5 sports halls based on the need for badminton courts. (Ref - PMP report 2006.)

Note: Private club facilities are excluded from the calculations due to a lack of casual public access. Improved access to these sites and school sites may help to meet this under supply. Village halls and community centres are also a particularly important resource and help to meet localised unmet demand.

Swimming Pools

Northampton Borough Council owns and operates three public swimming pool facilities at Lings Forum, Mounts Baths and Danes Camp Leisure Centre. The remaining facilities are either for school use or private use.

Public or Private	Swimming Pool	size (m^2)
Swimming Pools with full public access	Mounts Baths Danes Camp Lings Forum	366 212 250
Swimming Pools on school sites with dual-use access	Northampton School for Girls Weston Favell Upper School Northampton High School	187.5 187.5 159
Swimming Pools with private membership	Club Motivation Topnotch Health Club Cannons Health Club Marriot Health Club Virgin Active Club Esporta	60 90 160 78 250 200
Current Total supply		* 1699

(*Note: Public accessibility is restricted on the other pools at various times so supply is calculated reflecting these limitations as being a proportion of total capacity).

The PMP report sets a quantity standard for swimming pools of 10.51m^2 per 1000 population and a 15 minute drive time catchment has been set based on Sport England figures.

On this basis, current demand within Northampton is equivalent to 2045m^2 whilst current supply is 1699 m^2 giving a shortfall of 346m^2. A 25 metre 4 lane standard pool equates to 212m^2. Considering the Borough Council's facilities the under capacity roughly is equivalent to the 'Mounts' swimming pool.

Another key factor in the development of the swimming pools in the Borough is that the current pool at Weston Favell (Lings Forum) is reaching the end of its economic life. A design master plan for the area has been undertaken (ref Weston Favell District Centre Master plan by Atkins April 2005) but relies on land being available for this to happen.

Health and Fitness Studios

The PMP report concludes that the current provision is about right and that the Local Authority facilities have a critical role in the provision offering reasonable priced alternatives to the privately run facilities.

Arts/Culture/Heritage

Northampton already has two main theatres and three museums.

The Royal & Derngate reopened in autumn 2006 after a £15m redevelopment that created a single entrance for the two auditorium Theatre. The Derngate has a capacity of 1,500 and the Royal a capacity of 583 seats. The venue attracts over 350,000 visitors a year and houses national touring productions.

The town has other theatres including the recently refurbished Deco Theatre with a 900 seat auditorium although currently not fully utilised and the small community Playhouse Theatre with 84 seats. The town has three museums, The Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, Abington Park Museum and the recently opened, Charles Rennie Mackintosh house at 78 Derngate. There are several venues for live music including the Roadmender and the Town and Country Club. These are all important parts of the Northampton's cultural infrastructure adding charter and diversity to the town.

The heritage of the town is an important asset that has great potential to attract visitors with many historic Churches and other buildings including the Sessions House (The towns old Court House) and Delapre Abbey that are currently under utilised.

Central Location

Because of the town's central location in England it attracts many annual events, gatherings and rallies, such as the Northampton Annual Balloon Festival usually held in August. Other fairs and events also occur within the country surrounding the town including several steam traction engine shows, the Crick National Canal Boat show, sports events such as indoor short mat bowls attracted by the central location and easy travelling. Billing Aquadrome, a 235-acre camping, caravan and static caravan site with facilities for 400 electrical hook ups also hosts a programme of rallies and events throughout the year, holding car events for clubs such as VW, Jaguar and custom cars and purports to attract 1 million visitors a year.

Future - Leisure

Art/Culture/Heritage

Northampton currently has a fairly strong cultural offer in some areas with the Royal & Derngate and the Northampton Museum located around Guildhall Road in the Town centre. This gives great potential for a new cultural quarter to be developed around the theatre and museum creating a focal point and a strong destination in the town. There is an aspiration for a significant cultural venue at its centre that operates beyond the boundaries/parameters of what is considered a typical museum function. Complementary to this, other sections of this Economic Regeneration Strategy document support the idea of encouraging the location of cultural business and art workshops/studios in the same area.

NCC have plans for a tourist information centre in the Sessions House and there are moves to establish a heritage trail around the town centre churches and other town centre heritage buildings. These heritage buildings need to be utilised to their full potential including exploring the possibilities for Delapre Abbey. (ref also community and business start up)

A survey of cultural infrastructure is being undertaken to quantify supply, demand and capacity for art/cultural facilities in the town and in particular the need for a gallery. A feasibility study would help inform plans and decision-making.

Sport

The PMP report identifies a current short fall in sports facilities of 5 sports halls and a large swimming pool. The future demand can be crudely calculated using the Sport Council's figure for a swimming pool need of $10.51m^2$per 1000 people. If the population is projected to rise by a modest 30,000 people, this would give rise to a need for an increased capacity of

300m² or one medium sized pool (ref Mounts is 360m²), in addition to under capacity already calculated. This gives a minimum requirement of 2 pools with a modest population increase.

Similarly growth in population of 30,000 and applying 0,29 courts per 1000 population would give a need for 8.7 courts or 2 sports halls.

Further work is needed to investigate details of all sporting facilities in the town along with their current and future use. The work will need to take into consideration activities that engage all ages including adrenalin activities, skateboard parks, quality athletics facilities or short mat bowls etc., that may not be catered for in a traditional leisure centres. There is clearly potential for a major sports facility in the town. Taking into consideration the Town's location, 70 miles from the sea, there is also an opportunity to look at the potential of increasing the catchment area of a water-based facility/attraction that might compensate for the lack of a beach. Locating such a facility in a landmark building would also promote the facility to a wider audience.

<u>Targets - Leisure</u>

L1. Expansion of the Cultural/Arts Facilities for the New Northampton

Museums, galleries and theatre stimulate creativity, inspire learning, engage communities and help to build the knowledge economy. Northampton has some good facilities including the newly refurbished Royal and Derngate however the growth agenda give the opportunity to expand /create a major arts/cultural project. The options could include an Art Gallery that would be able to house national touring exhibitions, climatically controlled and secure etc. Investigating this option and other options would be part of a Cultural development in Northampton leading to major capital works for the town.

L2 Northampton's Museum & Gallery – an expanded and more attractive offer

The cultural facilities and history are key elements of 'place making' and Northampton's history is inextricably linked to the shoe industry. Northampton already has a 'designated' Boots and Shoes collection however a significant facility should be developed creating a 'Big City Museum' with National Status and an Art Gallery bringing historic Northampton to life promoting Northampton. The exact specification for of this needs to be developed as part of a wider Cultural Investment Plan.

L3. Build a New Major Sports Facilities for the New Northampton

Current reports shows that there is an under capacity in swimming pools and combined with an expanding population this would suggest the development of a major new sporting facility. There is an additional need to review current facilities and update them. These will lead to major capital projects in landmark buildings creating a major selling point for investment into the town.

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. This could be through a networked mobile phone system so promoting the richness of the towns' heritage and developed in partnership with the tourist information centre.

INFRASTRUCTURE

A key feature of a competitive knowledge economy is having good infrastructure making the town more attractive to invest and to live.

Transport

A key factor in a knowledge economy is connectivity (ref - Creating an Ideopolis – Case study of Manchester). By promoting the building of new offices in the town centre along side the current building of accommodation, people have the choice of being able to live, work and shop in the town centre without the need for a car. This connectivity cuts down the commuter traffic in and around the town and has a positive effect on the environment. To encourage this life style as a positive choice the town centre needs to be attractive with quality public realm and well-designed buildings.

Levels of congestion in and around Northampton will dramatically influence the economic well-being and the capacity for growth; there is a need to mitigate the impact from development by reducing the amounts of congestion on the roads.

Led by NCC there is a need to improve management of the existing highway network to optimise the utilisation of existing capacity, by defining a core network of roads essential to the town and the county's prosperity.

There is also a need for good transport planning and connectivity. Transport connectivity relates to the ability of people and goods to connect spatially and logically with seamless interconnection to other transport modes. Good national international, , inter-regional and intra-regional connections are vital for economic growth. It is important to note that transport connectivity concerns much more than just transport infrastructure projects but also includes soft measures such as travel demand management to reduce congestion. Therefore, good connectivity means predictable and reliable movement of people and goods that can be achieved by a combination of improved transport infrastructure and travel demand management.

Sustainable forms of transport should also be encouraged (ref - The Northamptonshire Local Transport plan, NCC March 2006) including journeys by walking, bike and bus. Northampton is a comparatively compact town, being 7 miles in diameter and cycling from one side to the other is quite possible.

The town centre is also fairly compact enabling a person to walk from one side to the other. This ability to use sustainable methods to circulate around the town is currently not promoted. Walking and cycling routes are quite variable in quality, often mixing cycling routes with car users. The Northampton Multi Modal Study (2003) states that the radial route is 'intimidating at present'. The poorly connected cycle route and busy road does not promote cycling use especially for first time users expecting a pleasant and safe journey.

Making the town more walkable and cycleable promotes healthy living and a feel-good factor of the town as well as being environmentally friendly. Encouraging these and other sustainable modes of transport, takes traffic off the roads freeing up road capacity and easing the potential need to build more roads.

The Northampton County Council Transport Strategy for Growth (Sept 2007) is a key document in establishing the right infrastructure and encourages the use of Public Transport. The promotion of bus use and the use of park and ride can also play a part in the freeing up of roads and sustainable travel. The best way to cut school traffic would be for the local school to be the first choice in an area avoiding the need for parents to drive their children across the town to the other schools. Unfortunately school results across the town are variable but this local use of schools may be a longer-term aspiration. In the short term, some schools in the town use bus services to aid travel to school and others need to have this facility so reducing traffic.

Park and ride is currently planned for Riverside Retail Park and Harvey Reeves Road by NCC, and although it may not work in all circumstances for Northampton, it is an option to develop for the future. Northampton is not geographically isolated from other major conurbations and does not currently have a strong enough retail offer compared to neighbouring towns with 18% of the south of the town already shopping in Milton Keynes. Park and Ride could be offered as an option and phased in as the town centre offer improves, but in the short term increased central parking fees may drive away trade to other towns or out of town shopping rather than take the option of a bus.
Park and ride could be an option for commuters currently being charged £35 per week in town centre car parks that wish to save money over a long period of time. It could also be an option to make edge of town employment sites such as Moulton park or Brackmills more accessible. Services would need to be frequent and financially sustainable.

Targets - Transport

T1. Develop for a sustainable transport network – with improved connectivity
Map out clear strategic cycle and walking routes through out Northampton and promote the development of these routes through developer contributions and other funding. Including strong links to the river Nene waterside.

T2. Support the Development of Sustainable Travel Plans
Encourage schools, colleges and the University of Northampton to develop School Travel Plans and promote school bus services for all schools as a way of reducing morning and evening traffic in the town and encourage sustainable Travel Smart planning for local business.

Car Parking

Car parking is a critical issue in the town. From the RAC report on Commuting (Sept 2007) it was identified that 71% of UK journeys to work are carried out by car. It is desirable to reduce the dependence on the car from an environmental, connectivity and health perspective. This will take time and more attractive alternatives need to be developed to aid in this change process. In the short to medium term it would be reasonable to assume that the travel patterns into the town centre would not dramatically change so giving a high dependency on provision of accessible car parking. Northampton Borough Council owns the majority of car parks and as such is aware of the sensitivity when charging to park in town centre car parks.

Land is limited within the town centre and the car parks also provide some of the opportunities for development. Development however needs to be carried out in a controlled way to ensure that accessibility of the town's car parking capacity and availability does not restrict shoppers but is carefully planned in line with the retail expansion strategy for the town centre.

If car parks are closed and developed on, or are temporarily inaccessible, the desirability to shop in the town would decrease with the increased difficulty for shoppers to find a parking space. As a worst-case scenario the economy of Northampton may be significantly affected as shoppers and traders desert the town centre in favour of other more accessible retail destinations.

A car parking strategy will be included in the CAAP which will enable forward planning and ensure development is not held up with potential unplanned demands to construct additional parking.

Work is needed on developing a car parking strategy to ensure that -

- Current capacity of car parking, both on and off road, is understood.
- Sufficient capacity of parking is maintained during regeneration of the town centre and that current business does not suffer from lack of trade if existing car parks are redeveloped.
- The long-term vision for car parking is considered and planned rather than being left to market forces.
- The future revenue income to the NBC and NCC understood.

<u>Targets – Car Parking</u>

T3. Support the use of Park and Ride as an option for travelling into town
Review the possibilities for park and ride schemes in and around the town.

T4. Car Parking Strategy – improved car parking offer
Car parking is significant in Northampton's current economy, for continued accessibility, development opportunities and future investment. Through a car parking strategy provide a comprehensive and effective network supportive of the town's improved and planned retail and business centre. A car parking strategy is needed for Northampton to ensure the impact of development of any car-parking site is understood financially and in relationship to the whole town's capacity.

T5. Develop Car Parks
Key Council assets can be used to stimulate development in the economy. The newly created assets could also give an alternative income source to the Council spreading risk. New strategic car parks may be needed at the entrance points around the town centre parameter freeing up surface car parks for development.

<u>Roads</u>

The strategy of living and working locally, walking and cycling and encouraging bus usage are all aimed at reducing the pressures on the existing road infrastructure so reducing the need to build more roads. The growth agenda and need to expand the town will however not negate the need for new road infrastructure. This will need to be planned in close partnership with Northamptonshire County Council to ensure all development plans are supported by well thought out high quality roads between and around major settlements.

<u>Target - Roads</u>

T6. Support New Road Developments – support sustainable new road infrastructure
Plan the town centre development in partnership with the county to ensure the road systems are adequate to support the new developments in the town.

<u>Railways Buses and model shift</u>

Northampton has good local rail connections with Birmingham to the north and London Euston to the south.

The town's railway station sits on a loop off the Northwest main line connecting London, Manchester and Glasgow but has a moderate service north south for these longer distance trains. There is room for more frequent services on these longer distance trains but would primarily require re-timetabling rather than infrastructure investment in the line.

Connections West to East along the Oxford/Cambridge arc are not so good and involves several changes to get to destinations. A new rail connection to the Midland Mainline (Bedford, Wellingborough, Kettering) is highly desirable and should be a longer-term aspiration. This would provide a direct route to Europe by train without the need to travel on London Underground.

The town did once have connections to Market Harborough and a second link to Bedford and these links may hold potential connections but would require major capital investment. The town centre railway station has been identified as having great potential for redevelopment. The current station is looking tired and a new station would create an impressive gateway into the town. By developing upward, space can be created for new offices that could further aid business growth in the town centre. The Northampton Central Area Design Development and movement framework suggests that 37,175m2 of office space could be created. Most of the land for this development is in Railtrack and private corporate ownership. The major task would be to re-locate the railway goods yard and road salt storage. There are no significant buildings on the site.
An alternative station south of the town could also be developed to reduce the commuter traffic in and out of the town and could provide a new hub for development of the south of the town in Hunsbury or on the south side of the motorway.

To encourage modal shift, bus facilities also need to be reviewed and promoted. This should include provision of frequency of services; real time travel data at bus stops; good interchange facilities and priority lanes for efficient services. To aid modal shift there is also a need to communicate and promote the alternative services available along with incentives to achieve a change of habits.

Smart Cards can play an important part in encouraging the change from car use by making alternative means of transport cheaper, easier and more attractive including removing the need for cash payments, speeding up boarding times and avoiding having to pay separately for each leg of a journey. This enables people to travel more often and farther and to undertake more complex journeys. This also means that people can gain better access to services and facilities which creates a more inclusive and more equal society, and particularly overcomes current barriers of social exclusion, low income, disability, isolation and inequality.

Targets – Railways and Buses

T7. Promote Better Rail Connections to Europe
Develop an east rail line to connect Northampton to the Midland Main Line and west to Daventry.

T8. Northampton Railway Station – a major gateway
Develop Northampton Railway station as a gateway into the town promoting the use of the site for a major office development as well as a potential site for conference and hotel facilities.

T9. Bus travel and modal shift
Ensure that a town Centre transport hub is part of a wider aim to promote modal shift connected to frequent bus services, with quality information and good interchanges. Led by NCC and planned as part of a town wide initiative the project and its benefits also need to be promoted to the public to achieve success.

General Infrastructure

Significant infrastructure provision will be needed with the housing, industry, retail and population growth. There is a need to ensure that with the population growth the utilities of water, gas, communications and electricity demand is correctly forecast along with education and heath provision. Town growth will come to a halt if supply of these is held back or planned transport systems do not support the developments. Good partnership working is needed to deliver these facilities with good communication to ensure that each other's needs and limitations are understood.

T10. Promote and support expansion of utilities to enable growth of the town.
Promote the timely planning of utilities, school and health provision to ensure they accurately projected as part of the town's growth.

Parks

There has been a major review of the parks and green infrastructure within Northampton Borough undertaken by PMP in their Open Space Sports and Recreation Report (OSSR) commissioned by NBC. This identifies the current space available and the potential shortfalls in facilities. The work carried out in developing Northampton's Community Strategy through the LSP highlighted that the parks, green space and village greens in and around the town are a major asset, coming top of the things that people liked most about Northampton. It is clear that these spaces are a major part of the character of the town and need to be acknowledged as such. From the audit of green space, there is a need to develop a Green Space Strategy to ensure that these assets continue to be a major part of Northampton and the town's expansion. There is potential to promote economic activity to aid the maintenance of some of these green spaces e.g. play, sport, café or parking etc in or around the space.

Target – Parks

T11. Deliver an improved Green Infrastructure
Develop a green space strategy for Northampton and implement the strategy as part of the growth agenda in consultation with partners including The River Nene Regional Park (RNRP)
These spaces could include a community city farm, allotments, orchards, and places to relax and enjoy, so creating new green infrastructure with ecosystems functions, flood defences, control of urban run off, biodiversity and food and green products for local markets. An example of city living is in Cuba where urban space is turned into local city market gardens creating functional green space in a dense urban setting.

Leadership

Good Leadership is a major building block in being able to deliver a successful Economic Regeneration strategy. Creating and improving a knowledge economy and competitive economic performance rely on good governance structures and a clear and speedy decision making process.

The degree of autonomy over strategic decision-making is one of the most significant distinguishing features between high performing continental European cities and their English counterparts. The differences can be seen in the different levels of control that cities have over local expenditure. There is a greater need to work in close partnership to achieve a positive result.

This economic strategy gives a way forward by building on Northampton's current economy, identifying the future from overarching partnership documents (ref - The bibliography) and from the targets set to achieve the vision.

The success of the Strategy is not only in being able to set targets but in the ability and willingness of stakeholders to unite in the delivery of these targets. As suggested above if there is unity and support to achieve the strategy and clear decision making then there is greater possibility to achieve the goals. This unity also needs to transgress political parties, as success will not be achieved by changing strategic direction half way through implementation.

This document does not propose to suggest a governance structure but aims to highlight that research from across the UK that governance and clear decision-making is an important part of successfully achieving this strategy. Partners in Northampton should explore other examples in the UK of how successful partnership has delivered results.

Target – achieve wider support for effective governance and delivery

The strategy needs to be adopted individually and collectively to be fully affective.

1. **Strategy Adoption - Internally**
   Adopting and implementing this strategy as an internally agreed strategy with each partner and across political parties.

2. **Strategy Adoption – External Stakeholders**
   Jointly adopting this strategy by key partners across Northampton as the way forward for Northampton.

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Appendices

Appendix 1
Summary Table of Targets