

Item No.

Date:	5th June 2007
Cabinet Member:	Richard Church
Portfolio:	Regeneration
Corporate Manager:	Chris Cavanagh
Directorate:	People, Planning and Regeneration

Report Title	Masterplanning of the St John's Cultural Quarter.
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The content of the report is noted.
- 1.2 Approval is given to the appointment of an external consultant for the initial masterplan to the St Johns Cultural Quarter.
- 1.3 That funding be identified either from available capital resources or prudential borrowing as outlined in the project appraisal at annex A.

2. Summary

- 2.1 There is no funding available from within Regeneration and Growth to commission a Masterplan for the development of the St. John's area of Northampton. £48k is required for the Masterplan.
- 2.2 On the strength of the agreement outlined under paragraph (6) below tenders have been sought from suitably experienced consultants. The tenders have been assessed and a preferred consultant selected but not appointed.
- 2.3 The Council is committed to this action under a formal funding agreement with EMDA. The Masterplan must be carried out as a matter of urgency to comply with funding requirements from East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA). Failure to comply would result in the loss of significant grant monies, currently valued at £2,000,000.

3. Report Background

- 3.1 A key Town Centre regeneration opportunity was identified in December 2003 and related to an eyesore building in the Town Centre, known as Blueberry Diner, a former canteen. Prior to this, the building was a telecommunications building, which was out of place with the planned adjacent regeneration improvements. These improvements include conversion of the former County Council offices to residential in Guildhall Road and a £20,000,000 refurbishment of the Royal and Dergate theatres.
- 3.2 EMDA was approached and as a result funded the land acquisition of the Blueberry Diner in financial year 2005/06 and the subsequent demolition works in 2006/07. The EMDA investment is backed up by a Funding Agreement, which transfers the land ownership to the NBC and commits the Council to progressing a Masterplan and appointing a developer partner.
- 3.3 NBC have led partnership working to prepare an agreed 'Brief' and secure a preferred masterplanner through the Council's procurement process. EMDA have been fully involved in the process. This has been difficult when attempting to incorporate other key sites in the ownership of NCC. Unfortunately, NCC has not been able to secure funding to cover their land. A revised programme has been agreed with EMDA must delivered or otherwise failure to do so will result with the Borough Council repaying £2,000,000 of grant.

4. Options and Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Do nothing option. Repay the £2,000,000 grant to EMDA.
- 4.2 In-house option. The in-house Regeneration Team does not have the required skills and resources to deliver the Masterplan within the agreed timescales.
- 4.3 External option. Appoint a preferred consultant using the Councils procurement process.

5. Resource Implications (including Financial Implications)

5.1 Funding will be identified either from existing capital resources or through prudential borrowing. Should prudential borrowing be used it will cost a maximum of £3,000 in year one and £5,000 from year two onwards and will be met from the debt financing budget. The Capital project appraisal at Annex A outlines sources of funding.

5.2 Breakdown of funding is as following:

	£
Consultant Masterplanner costs	39K
Additional work envisaged *	4K
Contingency	<u>5K</u>
	48K

6. Risk and Opportunity Issues

Risk

Failure by the Council to deliver the Masterplan within the agreed timescale would result in repaying £2,000,000 back to EMDA.

Opportunity

Securement of EMDA investment of £2,000,000 and potential further investments.

Provision of a masterplan and site appraisal to deliver a mixed-use regeneration development in the heart of the cultural centre of Northampton. The proposal is based on the recommendations of the Northampton Central Area Design Development and Movement Framework; supported by Cabinet (19 December 2007).

7. Consultees (Internal and External)

Internal	Asset Management, Legal Services, Financial Services
External	WNDC, EMDA, EP, NCC

8. Compliance Issues**A: How Proposals Deliver Priority Outcomes****Recovery Plan**

The strategic improvement plan has an item to deliver sustainable growth.

Corporate Plan

This proposal supports the 2007-2011 Corporate Plan objective.

- To promote economic development and growth in Northampton.

The proposal supports the Corporate Plan 2007-2011 Council Priority No 7. To work with partnering to support economic infrastructure development to promote communities that are sustainable.

This is considered a priority regeneration project by Cabinet on 19 December 2006.

B: Other Implications**Other Strategies**

The Local Strategic Partnership, Local Area Agreement, regional and sub-regional policy all have stated visions with regards to regeneration and growth in Northampton.

Equalities Assessment under consideration to ensure there is no prejudice towards minority groups.

Finance Comments

Legal Comments

8. Background Papers

Title	Description	Source

Name	Signature	Date	Ext.
Author (Name and Title)	Mike Kitchen Regeneration Project Officer	21/05/07	7681
Corporate Manager (Name and Title)	Chris Cavanagh Regeneration and Growth	21/05/07	8461

Cabinet Member:

I declare no conflict of interest applies

I agree the report's recommendations

I do not agree the report's recommendations

I agree the report's recommendations subject to the following amendments:

The reason for the decision are as follows:

Cabinet Member For: Regeneration

Signature: _____

Date: _____