

Appendices
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Item No.
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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	1 October 2007
Key Decision:	Yes
Listed on Forward Plan:	Yes
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	Yes
Directorate:	Regeneration and Growth
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Richard Church
Ward(s)	All

1. Purpose

1.1 The Council's Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy will be a key document for the Borough and relates directly to the Corporate Plan to 'promote economic development and growth in Northampton'. The Strategy sets out the Economic and Regeneration vision and priorities. The document also puts into words the actions that are required to achieve this objective over a projected time period up to 2021. Using National and regional, planning and economic regeneration policy the Council needs to lead this process supported by its partners.
This report seeks to approve a draft strategy to consult the wider community before returning to Cabinet in January 2008 with a final version for adoption.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The cabinet is asked to approve the draft Economic Regeneration Strategy (Appendix 1).
2.2 That Cabinet agree to commence a programme of consultation to ensure the final version is one that the Borough Council's partners can all sign up to.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy aims to provide an agreed direction for Northampton's Future. The regeneration and growth of the Town will have a significant impact on the shape of the economy over the next 15 years and into the future.

3.1.2 The document will be used both internally and externally with our partners to show the key priorities and projects so ensuring good communication and buy in with all key partners. The document includes an executive summary; it shows the current economic position of the Borough, the future aspiration and the actions to be taken to deliver this. It is broken down into easily understandable themes or chapters looking at the broad economy ensuring all building blocks to success are identified. The document has taken into consideration national and regional policy as well as local needs in its development.

3.1.3 The Council's Regeneration and Growth Department has been developing a strategy, working towards implementing this and working in partnership across the region with partners including:

- Local Strategic Partnership
- West Northamptonshire Development Corporation,
- Northamptonshire County Council,
- Northamptonshire Enterprise Limited,
- English Partnerships,
- East Midlands Development Agency and
- GOEM.

3.1.4 The primary use of this document is to: -

- 1) Give leadership and direction to Northampton and bring forward cohesion to the priorities for the Northampton Economy.
- 2) Promote joint workings and understanding with key partners in delivering a long-term structured programme of work.
- 3) Provide corporate direction for NBC's activities.
- 4) Ensure clear priorities and objectives for resources, including; financial, people and assets to deliver the agreed strategy.

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

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 This Economic Regeneration Strategy for Northampton is more than a vision and aims to give clear direction looking at local needs and regional strategies.

The core of the document looks at:

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

3.2.2 The Central Government Growth Agenda gives Northampton greater opportunity than most places in the UK. The number of houses in the town is set to increase from 80,000 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.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 The option to do nothing is not acceptable as significant numbers of homes continue to be delivered through commercial activity. The supporting town facilities need to be clearly planned to ensure Northampton is an attractive place to live, work and invest. This will ensure Northampton gains from the opportunities presented from developer contributions and central government funding available to aid growth of the town.

3.3.2 The 'do nothing' option could result in a substantial grant being spent in an uncoordinated and incoherent way with poor results for the town.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

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

4.2 Resources and Risk

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

In the initial implementation of the strategy planning and feasibility studies are required to be carried out to fully understand the dynamic of key issues and to ensure that the option decisions are taken and developed before significant construction activity is undertaken. This planning activity will need to be budgeted for to start the process off and prove the case for major capital funding from developers and other government partners such as WNDC, NEL and EMDA. There is a risk that the plan is approved but action is restricted because initial budgets are not available to implement the plan.

4.3 Legal

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

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 An equality and diversity assessment needs to be carried out and groups consulted on the strategy.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 An extensive internal consultation has taken place giving all managers, corporate managers and directors and CEO the chance to contribute to the evolving document. Key partners have also been consulted for initial thoughts including EMDA, EP, WNDC, NEL, and NCC. The next step is to consult with a wider audience before all key stakeholders sign up to the final version.

A list of intended External Consultees and the programme is attached.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 Northampton Borough Council's Corporate Plan sets out 5 main objectives to be achieved over the next 4 years. One of these is 'To promote economic development and growth in Northampton'. This NBC corporate objective is the driving force in writing the Economic Regeneration Strategy and in the future implementation of the strategy.
- 4.6.2 Northampton's Economic Regeneration Strategy takes its primary lead from local needs but also takes its guide from the East Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (RES), Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Northamptonshire Sub Regional Economic Strategy (SRES). These documents feed into the Local Area Agreement (LAA) that sets out specific targets. The Northampton Economic Regeneration Strategy does not aim to repeat these targets and objectives in this document but rather to give specific local achievable direction in areas of influence aiming to add value to the current overarching work.
- 4.6.3 The strategy will be the framework for delivering economic development, regeneration and growth of Northampton.

4.7 Other Implications

The Central Government Growth Agenda projects the number of houses in the town is set to increase from 80,000 to 111,500 by 2021 and a further increase to 2031. This projected increase in housing and associated growth in population gives an opportunity to regenerate the town and build on the successes that Northampton has to offer. From planned housing growth comes the increased demand for retail, jobs, leisure, green space and transport etc.

5. Background Papers

5.1

Management board paper 6 Sept 2007
Corporate Plan 2007 11
Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy
Regional Economic Strategy
Sub regional Economic Strategy

Mick Lorkins
Economic Intelligence Manager t:8033

