



**NORTHAMPTON  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Item No.

9

<b>Name of Committee</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Directorate:</b>	Regeneration and Growth
<b>Corporate Manager:</b>	Christopher Cavanagh
<b>Date:</b>	19 December 2006

<b>Report Title</b>	Regeneration Progress and priorities
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<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>YES</b>
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**1. Recommendations**

Cabinet are requested to:

1. Note progress and actions to date
2. Agree the strategic direction for regeneration and growth as set out in this report
3. Agree the project priorities proposed in item 4.3
4. Whilst noting the Council's policy to pool all capital receipts in support of the Council's capital programme priorities, to note that in some specific regeneration schemes it may be appropriate to explore the use of the Council's land as a resource in regeneration partnerships.
  - to generate long term revenue returns for the Council
  - to consider using a proportion of receipts from land sales to support regeneration initiatives on a case by case basis.
5. Support the Town Centre Vision (refer to background paper Northampton Central Area Design, development and movement framework)
6. It is proposed that the BDP report is noted by Cabinet and supported, in general, for wide engagement through public consultation. (A further report will be submitted to cabinet following consultation).
7. Agree to setting up and participation in Joint working arrangements with Partner Organisations (details of individual arrangements to be subject of separate reports)

## **2. Summary**

This report reviews work over the past year in formation and stabilising a regeneration team and its activities and proposes a strategy for taking regeneration and growth forward. The emphasis is on prioritisation of projects that will act as catalysts for leveraging 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, and other key projects that can follow consultation on the Central Area Framework and the 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. There is an imperative to demonstrate, to inward investors, that the Council is tackling its regeneration challenge and therefore key priority schemes should be brought forward as quickly as possible.

Also, in continuation of the successful partnership working that has already taken place and is ongoing, the Council should formally commit to further joint working with its key delivery partners, develop an agreed methodology for joint delivery of major projects and take a leading role in the Town Centre.

## **3. Report Background**

### **Introduction / Purpose**

Following key successful joint working initiatives in delivery of a Central Area Framework, this report builds on this and sets out at a strategic level the progress made in regeneration over the past year, together with a plan for the future. Cabinet are asked to note the progress to date and support the strategic direction and priorities.

The main body of this report is set out as follows

- Progress and actions to date
- Strategic Direction
- Programme and project priorities
- Land use
- Vision
- Partnerships

The content of the above sections is given in a summarised form with reference to appendices. Background papers show the detail and reasoning used to develop the summarised position that is recommended.

## **4. Options and Evaluation of Options**

### **4.1 Progress and actions to date**

A Council review of corporate management resulted in the appointment of ten Corporate Managers in September 2005, one of which would be responsible for Regeneration and Growth. A Root and Branch review led to the appointment of a Regeneration Manager and Team Leader (Major Projects), however both left the Council in Spring 2006. Whilst the organisational structure has been developed, recruitment difficulties in an area that has a nationally scarce resource resulted in a tender for interim regeneration managers and the appointment of EC Harris.

The initial work in stabilising the regeneration teams position with partners and understanding the wider context to regeneration projects whilst ensuring moving forward has been a priority. The neighbourhood renewal aspects of regeneration have successfully secured major funding and moved rapidly to implementation of projects that address the sustainable communities agenda, focussing on the most deprived areas of the Borough.

The current work has been organised into the following programme priorities

- Central Area
- Neighbourhood renewal
- South West District
- Northampton Brownfield Initiative
- Dallington Grange

Further background is given in background paper - Detail of progress to date

Achievements to date include:

- Effective joint working to bring forward the Northampton Brownfield Initiative to facilitate regeneration at Sixfields, Harvey Reeves Road and Ransome Road. The opening of a new link road – Edgar Mobbs Way – in November 06 has been a significant step forward. This has secured :-
  - Provision of access to employment land regenerating contaminated land providing a new Wildlife Park and access to it.
  - Enhancement of the town's flood protection.
  - Reduction of traffic congestion on Weeden Road and improvement for residents in terms of noise/air quality.
  - Improvement of access and car parking for the town's rugby and football clubs.
- The vision for the Central Area Framework (Town Centre Vision) has been produced, supported by the commissioning partners and generally well received within the Council.
- Joint Member presentation/debate on the Town centre with NBC, NCC and WNDC
- Following reallocation of the Grosvenor/Greyfriars project to R&G, assessment and negotiations moving forward with L&G, Stagecoach and EP
- Development sites at Freeschool Street and Great Russell Street have been identified and grants from EMDA approved to help assess site Assembly
- The site of the Blueberry diner has been acquired with EMDA secured funding.

Further funding has also been secured to complete demolitions and site clearance and provision of a temporary car park to assist the successful opening of the major refurbishment of Derngate and Royal Theatres.

- Positive progress and appointment of consultants is bringing the Grosvenor Centre redevelopment forward with a target to sign a development agreement by May 2007.
- Working with the Town Centre Commission has been productive and positive
- Building and transferring resources to establish a credible regeneration resource to support delivery of the Corporate Priority and Growth Agenda together with increased resources in Planning Policy, Conservation planning, Housing Strategy and Economic Intelligence.

## **4.2 Strategic Direction**

The Direction of the Regeneration team is proposed to

- Align with the vision for Northampton, the corporate plan and regional / sub regional regeneration and growth policies. Further information is given in background paper – Vision for Northampton.
- Ensure regeneration initiatives and Projects take due account of social regeneration issues and the needs of the local communities with a view to achieving benefits that are sustainable for the residents of Northampton.
- Work in Partnership with other authorities and bodies including
  - WNDC
  - NCC
  - English Partnerships
  - EMDA
  - Local Strategic Partnershipthrough contribution and leadership of joint initiatives and active participation in jointly coordinated Strategic and Infrastructure Groups.
- Ensure the Regeneration strategy and delivery plan is, as appropriate, fully integrated with the Local Strategic Partnership, Area Forums and Town Centre Commission.
- Recruit permanent staff into the established regeneration team structure within approved budgets.
- Build on Northampton's wealth of heritage and historic context and be innovative.
- Significantly improve the quality of the Public Realm.
- Promote and support the key projects that will act as catalysts to investment and regeneration that provide:
  - Required physical infrastructure
  - Affordable housing
  - Economic environment to attract quality employment and inward investment
  - Sustainable community and physical infrastructure
  - High quality public realm
  - Improved and distinctive retail offerTaking into account Impact and deliverability, further detail is given in background paper – Realising the Potential of Northampton
- Strive to Deliver high quality architecture and sustainable buildings.
- Consider Landmark buildings and Gateway Architecture.

### 4.3 Programme and Project Priorities

The work to date has identified a wealth of regeneration opportunities and potential projects. The organisation and grouping of projects and programmes has created a project list that is included in the background papers – Regeneration Project List and Priority Rankings (with further explanation in background paper - Prioritising projects)

The work in bringing forward the Central area regeneration is proposed as the highest programme priority, Proposed key projects are:

- Central area feasibility study (more of an essential forerunner than a straight priority). This work has progressed significantly to the point where a vision for the Town centre has been produced and presented to members and the Town centre Commission.
- Grosvenor/Greyfriars – focal retail development and expansion.
- St Johns / County hall / Angel St area – development of a cultural quarter.
- 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 St / Marefair
  - Market Square
  - Abington St
  - Cultural Mile
  - The Cross
  - The Waterways
  - Approaches
  - Gateways
  - The Racecourse
- Great Russell Street – links Town Centre to University with live work units.
- The Mounts Car park.
- St Peters area – Three projects in close proximity
  - Freeschool Street – mixed use development expanding quality of town centre
  - St Peters Way – mixed use (residential prominence) along riverside
  - St Peters square car Park – retail development probable food store and multi-storey Car Park
- Bridge St / Waterfront – expansion of social uses and opening up mixed use (emphasis on residential) adjacent to river.

Of these Town Centre projects it is proposed that the Grosvenor/Greyfriars retail led scheme, St.Johns Cultural quarter, and Gold St/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. At its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2006 the Town Centre Commission supported the proposal that the Council continue to bring forward these projects as soon as possible with its partners.

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

- Northampton Brownfield Initiative (Ransome Road, Sixfields, Harvey Reeves Rd) – development of reclaimed brown field land
- Upton – sustainable residential development in SW Northampton
- Nene Valley country Park – provision of quality riverside recreation facilities and nature reserves
- Dallington Grange – residential development of up to 3500 homes with local centre in NW Northampton
- General Hospital – Private finance Initiative redevelopment of Hospital
- Major Infrastructure – roads and services required to deliver other high priority projects, as such this has been categorised High priority.

The current regeneration budget does not allow for the Council to take a leading funding role in these projects although NBC jointly chair the NBI and are supporting Partners who can eg: WNDC, EP.

The above priority projects together with other key projects, their interactions and emerging policies have been considered to produce an indicative high-level long-term plan. This plan is to be used a guide to activities required and anticipated. The plan is not intended to fetter emerging policies and public consultation but to give a baseline around which to focus. A review mechanism that reassess the plan will be put in place to ensure ongoing relevance.

The indicative long term programme of activity (available as a Background paper) is designed to stimulate and sustain the regeneration within Northampton to realise the vision. The chart gives more detail in the earlier years as strategies and planning programmes are brought forward. A car parking strategy is being developed by NBC and NCC in addition to a general transport strategy by NCC. Clearly this will be fundamental to informing other key priorities.

It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of projects and activity but a guide which sets in a context of logical order and timeframe the activities important to the regeneration effort. The priority projects / programmes are tackled first with other important activity feeding in over a period of time. There is a concentration to start delivering projects early whilst putting the building blocks in place for others to follow. Early impact gives both public funding authorities and private developers confidence to invest and sustain the regeneration and growth activity that levers further investment into Northampton from employers and individuals that see Northampton offering an attractive and supportive environment.

The indicative plan will develop over time to take account of current and emerging documents including

- Local Development Framework
- Sustainable Communities Agenda
- Housing Strategy

More detail to the above issues is given in Appendix 5 - Supporting Projects / connections.

#### **4.4 Land Use**

The issue of Land ownership is fundamental to development and bringing forward projects. The Council owns strategic land that is required for major projects especially in the Town Centre. This is considered to be a major benefit to the Council which means it can help ensure delivery and ensure the Council has a leading role to play in shaping the future of the Town.

Overall the Council can use its land to influence the type, mix and style of development through development agreements or through conditions of sale. In addition, land can be used as the investment the Council can bring to a partnership or joint venture. This allows the Council to have ongoing influence over development of its land and provides opportunities to share in the longer term benefits. The management and terms of such partnerships have to be carefully set out to limit risk to the Council.

The other key influencer is WNDC as Development Control Authority.

Each project where use of land as a resource is possible should be considered on its own merit and a business case made to secure the relevant approvals prior to a joint arrangement being formalised.

Whilst noting the Council's policy to pool all capital receipts in support of the Council's capital programme priorities, to note that in some specific regeneration schemes it may be appropriate to explore the use of the Council's land as a resource in regeneration partnerships.

- to generate long term revenue returns for the Council
- to consider using a proportion of receipts from land sales to support regeneration initiatives on a case by case basis.

In instances where simply selling land for best consideration and where regeneration can be optimised with additional funding, consideration should be given to securing partial amounts to a regeneration fund. This can help pump prime other key developments and improvements that are otherwise difficult to instigate. The fund can help secure further investments from funding agencies that require some element of match funding.

#### **4.5 Vision For Central Area**

Please refer to the Background paper for details and to consider its content.

The "Northampton Central area Design, development and movement framework". Is a study commissioned and input into jointly by the partner organisations (NBC/WNDC/NCC/EP). The Report produced by BDP (Building Design Partnership) converts research and ideas into a proposed Vision for the Town Centre. The Report has been used to consult with Members and directors of NBC / NCC / WNDC, the Town Centre Commission and key staff within NBC. A generally favourable response has been received helping the vision develop into the final report that is listed as a background paper. The WNDC Board has approved the adoption of the BDP report. It is important to recognise that the BDP report, whilst

an important piece of consultancy work, does not form planning or other policy of the Council. It identifies opportunities for regeneration in the town over a long term and much more work is required before any individual project is approved especially where people's homes or business's are identified or where people's lives are affected. It is therefore important to consult widely. It is proposed that the BDP report is consulted on as a background document in parallel with consultation of the Core Strategy and Central Area Action Plan in the new year. This will commence with a launch of the document in the new year.

The Town centre vision builds on the historic context of the town and street layout, this important factor will be brought out in any consultation discussions.

#### **4.6 Partnerships**

The delivery of projects will need to be a joint effort with our partners WNDC, NCC, English Partnerships and EMDA. It is recommended that Council Officers consider further the proposed working arrangements to ensure resource is most appropriately and efficiently allocated. A paper setting out proposed governance arrangements is currently being discussed between WNDC and NBC. When complete this will be the subject of a separate report to this Cabinet.

It is recommended that a joint procurement strategy is developed with the partner organisations with an emphasis on partnering with a few Contractors and/or consultants to ensure consistent high quality and economies in repeat delivery. This is especially relevant to delivering the Exceptional Public Realm.

### **5. Resource Implications (including Financial Implications)**

The Councils Corporate Plan clearly sets out a priority for investment in regeneration and economic development. There are agencies with funding available but these often need match funding. It is clear that the Council is addressing this priority in supporting the staff budget for regeneration established over the last few months. However a fund for initiating schemes of significant importance, by masterplanning, commissioning feasibilities, marketing or managing as is appropriate would allow the regeneration team to act with our partners to bring forward projects that would act as catalysts to lever in private developers investment. These initiatives would be additional to the contribution developers have to make through the development control process.

It is requested that consideration is given to a proportion of land receipts received being placed in a regeneration budget to create a fund that can be used to lever private investment and/or used for match funding to attract grants. The size of any fund and the proportion of land sale receipts this requires is still a matter for discussion. A growth bid for next years budget has been submitted that seeks £740 000 for next year.

For this fund to be sustainable it is recommended that the Council invests in developments to create an income stream for the future. Each proposal would need to be subject to risk assessment and individual scheme approval by Cabinet.

The other area of significant expenditure that needs to be considered is the ongoing maintenance and management costs that will be necessary for exceptional public



realm, once built, to remain exceptional. There are ways of capitalising short term maintenance costs and including them in project budgets, however the ongoing management and maintenance will need to be provided for. A combination of funding may be the answer and an agreement with the County council regarding standards is being discussed. Unless this matter is specifically addressed as part of the life cycle costs, experience elsewhere demonstrates that high quality public realm can degrade relatively quickly.

## **6. Risk and Opportunity Issues**

The various projects and initiatives discussed and recommended in this report are designed for Northampton to embrace the opportunities offered by the growth agenda.

The Council is fortunate that the relevant agencies have all invested in the Borough over the past year and this should be seen as an opportunity to build upon

The main risk is seen as loss of opportunity. Without leadership and funding to initiate regeneration there is a possibility that Northampton Town will continue to decline. The Council needs resources to secure these opportunities.

## **7. Consultees (Internal and External)**

<b>Internal</b>	<b>Asset Management, Finance, Legal</b>
<b>External</b>	<b>WNDC, EMDA, EP, NCC through joint meetings</b>

## **8. Compliance Issues**

### **A: How Proposals Deliver Priority Outcomes**

#### **Recovery Plan**

The strategic improvement plan has an item to deliver sustainable growth. This report directly addresses the need to produce a regeneration Strategy that is highlighted as an action in the Improvement delivery plan. This work is ongoing. Decisions taken on items in this paper will inform this.

#### **Corporate Plan**

Corporate plan priority 3 provides for regeneration and economic development, However regeneration contributes to all areas in the corporate plan – as discussed in appendix 2 – Vision for Northampton and in particular those priorities for listening to people, improving Housing and the Cleaner, Safer, Greener agenda which are underpinned by delivery of regeneration schemes.

The Regeneration Team can drive forward actions to deliver these priorities.

## B: Other Implications

### Other Strategies

The Local Strategic Partnership, Local Area Agreement, regional and sub-regional policy all have stated visions with regard to regeneration and growth in Northampton. These have been considered in producing this report and further information is found in Appendix 2 – Vision for Northampton. The current work in revising the Vision with the Local Strategic Partnership is being followed closely to ensure regeneration strategy remains aligned.

Asset Management Officers are supportive of the proposals in this paper.

### Finance Comments

Interim Director of finance and S151 Officer confirm that finance comments are covered in this report.

### Legal Comments

## 9. Background Papers

Title	Description	Source
Northampton Central area Design, development and movement framework	Vision for Town Centre	BDP – available on NBC internet site (Nov '06) under planning Policy – Background papers
Regeneration Project List and Priority Ranking	A categorised listing of current and possible regeneration projects and programmes. A further list that shows projects scored against regeneration criteria to give priority rankings	Regeneration Team
Indicative long term plan	A programme of likely high level activities developed to guide the regeneration process so that a context for 12 to 15 years is considered	Regeneration Team
Detail of Progress To Date	Further detail of progress made so far	E C Harris
Vision for Northampton	Discussion of progress of Visions developed by NBC and partners	E C Harris
Realising the Potential of Northampton	Further discussion of the potential to be tapped	E C Harris
Prioritising Projects	Assessment of criteria of projects	E C Harris
Supporting Projects / Connections	Co-ordinated approach	E C Harris

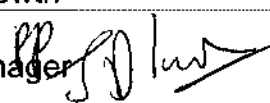
**Abbreviations used**

NBC Northampton Borough Council

NCC Northamptonshire County Council

EP English Partnerships

WNDC west Northamptonshire Development Corporation

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