



4th September 2012

Agenda Item:

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE GROWTH PLAN**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Economic Development Committee with an update on the approach being taken in the development of the Nottinghamshire Growth Plan and the opportunity to influence the Plan's development.

Information and Advice

2. The Nottinghamshire Growth Plan (NGP) was initiated earlier this year following a series of informal discussions between Members and the Chief Executive with businesses and business organisations across the County and with key organisations impacting upon the economy such as the Universities, Further Education sector and the Nottinghamshire Business Engagement Group.
3. The Nottinghamshire Growth Plan is a parallel Plan to the Nottingham Growth Plan which has been created to support growth in the city area. The Nottingham Growth Plan was also instrumental in negotiating the Nottingham City Deal which has implications for parts of the County, for example the City Deal investment fund for business growth is a Countywide fund. Senior Members and Chief Officers from both Councils have provisionally agreed to the two Growth plans being complementary and reliant upon each other, this has been warmly welcomed by the business community.
4. Two factors merit early reference:
 - Firstly, in order to secure an appropriate focus, the Plan will major on economic growth in Nottinghamshire. It is not intended to be a wide ranging economic regeneration strategy which might have covered aspects such as quality of life, social inequality or community development.
 - Secondly, while the County Council is facilitating the development of the Growth Plan, it is not designed as a County Council Plan, but a wider Growth Plan for Nottinghamshire. The Growth Plan will belong to Nottinghamshire partners, aiming to harness the commitment of business leaders and key stakeholders in shaping its focus and leading on its delivery.
5. A number of drivers for the development of a Nottinghamshire Growth Plan have been identified in discussion and these may be summarised as follows.

- (a) A number of structural dynamics will influence Nottinghamshire's economic future and many of the issues facing the County appear challenging. There are also many opportunities which if exploited, will help drive positive economic change. These will be referenced during the presentation to the Committee preceding this report on the State of the Nottinghamshire Economy;
- (b) A desire has been expressed by the local business community and a range of Nottinghamshire partners to explore a collective long-term response which is both appropriate in the context of an immediately difficult economic climate nationally and over a period of austerity which is likely to continue for some time to come;
- (c) There is a desire from private and public sector partners to champion the Nottinghamshire economy, seeking strategic leadership from the County Council in developing a collective vision for an economically vibrant and wealthy County. The request is for a Plan which will enable Nottinghamshire's economic priorities to be articulated at a national level with Government and at a sub-regional level with the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership. The Plan will enable strategic interventions at a County level and provide a context for activity at more local levels, the plan will also provide a shared understanding of the opportunities and ambitions for the County's growth;
- (d) As part of this process we are looking to develop deeper positive relationships with the County's Business Community recognising that it is only businesses that generate wealth enhance entrepreneurial activity and deliver greater prosperity for the County;
- (e) There are growing expectations nationally that local authorities and their partners should have a stronger role and responsibility to deliver local economic growth. Considerations include the maximising of the economic impact of public sector spend; the localisation of business rates and emerging perspectives regarding new, innovative public/private sector investment mechanisms;
- (f) The plan will help identify activities and actions that may require additional effort and resource. These will form the basis of bids for external funding including Regional Growth Fund, influencing, attracting and applying for additional funding (public and/or private) for agreed priorities requires a clear strategic perspective with a focus on a key set of issues where intervention is needed most and where they may have the best economic impact.

The Approach

- 6. Linked to the report is the latest State of the Nottinghamshire Economy update, this report offers the opportunity for members to support the development of the Plan which will ultimately be presented to a future Policy Committee for consideration.
- 7. Rather than adopting the more usual approach of developing a draft and seeking comments, the Economic Development Service has embarked on a series of in depth conversations with key agencies and businesses to support the development of the following four themes:
 - Infrastructure

- Aspiration and Talent
- Competitive Business Growth
- Reputation & Promotion

8. This accords with good practice and offers an opportunity for key stakeholders to influence the Plan at its earliest stages. Attached at Appendix A is a schematic which has been used to support these initial discussions. Those involved in each of the themes to date are as follows:

Competitive Business Growth	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business leaders of two successful and growing Nottinghamshire businesses • A leading Venture Capitalist; • Oxford Innovation • Leaders from the Business Support sector • Representatives from the Chamber and FSB • Local University representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways Agency • Network Rail • British Telecom • Bus / public transport representation; • County Council Highways Services • A business leader active in the road / haulage and green technology sectors • District Council representation
Aspiration & Talent	Reputation & Promotion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nottinghamshire City & County Employment & Skills Board • Enable • FE representation • Job Centreplus • Nottinghamshire Training Network • Nottinghamshire Futures • County Council Children & Young People services • Business leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience Nottinghamshire • Local Business Club representatives • Mansfield Business Improvement District representative • Representatives from Nottinghamshire attractions • Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club • Invest in Nottingham Club representative • UKTI

9. By the time of the date of the Committee meeting, initial meetings for all four themes will have been held. It will be noted that not all of the above referenced organisations will be able to attend these initial meetings but contact has been maintained.

10. The following set of points offers an overview of the main issues arising from the meetings held to date:

- Each of the theme group’s participants have welcomed the approach and have offered every encouragement to the development of a Plan for Nottinghamshire;
- The participants generally expressed a desire to remain engaged in the process acting as critical friends and supporting the development of activity over the coming months;
- There is a desire that any plan be focussed upon action and be clear on a set number of key priorities;
- It is seen as crucial that any Plan should aim to add value to existing activity, develop new ideas where provision is missing or lacking and draw out clearer linkages and

closer working between the many agencies with different responsibilities operating at different levels across the County;

- A strong message emerged that the Plan should look to the long term, potentially over a 20 year period;
- There is agreement that the themes are broadly correct though clearly there are inter-relationships to be explored;
- Of the meetings held at the time of writing, the Infrastructure meeting had perhaps a different feel as this majored on the existing plans of the relevant organisations as they impacted upon Nottinghamshire but was nonetheless helpful in supporting the initial development of the theme.

11. In relation to the specifics discussed under each theme, these will be presented to the Committee at the September meeting, offering the opportunity to discuss and influence further the Plan's development.

Timescales and Next Steps

12. The Nottinghamshire Growth Plan will be considered at a future meeting of the Policy Committee, following which will be a period of consultation and refinement. This report offers the opportunity for the Committee to reflect on the presentation on the State of the Nottinghamshire Economy, influence the Growth Plan's development and offer observations on each of the themes. Given the fact that additional information will be provided on the day of the Committee (as referenced at paragraph 10 above) comments from Committee members are welcome for a period up to 18th September 2012,

Other Options Considered

13. The Council may choose not to develop a Growth Plan on behalf of partners and stakeholders. Discussions held thus far with predominantly business-related sources have offered every positive encouragement to the Council to lead on this approach to enhance self-reliance within our communities and to develop a larger private sector economy in Nottinghamshire. Choosing not to develop a Plan will be a significant disappointment to private and public sector partners and agencies.
14. The planned localisation of business rates will be an important issue for local Councils. The Growth Plan is intended to help stimulate growth and increase the ability to generate increased business rates across the County.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

15. The promotion of the economy of the County is one of the Council's priorities under its Strategic Plan and the drivers for the development of the Plan are referenced above. The approach referenced in this report aims to bring all parties' interests into the one Plan. It will be designed to ensure that every effort is made to bring about investment, promote indigenous business growth, stimulate new economic opportunities and generate wealth.

Statutory and Policy Implications

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding

of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

17. There are no immediate financial implications arising as a consequence of this report.

Equalities Implications

18. The Nottinghamshire Growth Plan will look to ensure that economic opportunities are available to all within the County, with the generation of wealth and of a sense of self-reliance bringing opportunities to residents, businesses and communities alike. The process adopted in the development of the Plan allows for all to participate in its development.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- (a) Welcomes the development of a Growth Plan for Nottinghamshire;
- (b) Offers observations on the process and the approach being explored with partners and stakeholders and
- (c) Supports its further development through the offering of comments both overall and as they relate specifically to the individual themes.

Report of the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Celia Morris, Group Manager Corporate Strategy ext 72043

Constitutional Comments

Financial Comments(DJK 23.08.2012)

The contents of this report are duly noted; there are no financial implications.

Background Papers

Individual theme group briefings

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All