



Committee: COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Date: THURSDAY, 17 JANUARY 2008

Venue: LANCASTER TOWN HALL

Time: 4.30 P.M.

A G E N D A

****Please note location****

****Please note that in accordance with the Committee decision this meeting will be conducted without printed agendas. Instructions will be issued on how to load the agenda to your laptop. Please bring your laptop to the meeting****

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of meeting held on 15th November 2007 (previously circulated).

3. **Items of Urgent Business Authorised by the Chairman**

4. **Declarations of Interest**

5. **Civic Programme - Reception for Overseas Students (Pages 1 - 3)**

Report of Head of Democratic Services

6. **H M Revenues & Customs - VAT Regulations (Pages 4 - 6)**

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

7. **Local Petitions and Calls for Action - Consultation Response (Pages 7 - 33)**

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

8. **North West Development Agency Draft Corporate Plan - Consultation Response (Pages 34 - 91)**

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

9. **Review of Computer Usage by Members (Pages 92 - 99)**

Report of the Head of Democratic Services and Head of Customer & Information Services

10. **Appointments to Committees and Changes to Membership**

The Committee will consider any appointments to committees and changes to membership.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) Membership

Councillors Susan Bray (Chairman), Morgwn Trolinger (Vice-Chairman), Shirley Burns, Geoff Knight, Karen Leytham, Joyce Pritchard and Rob Smith

(ii) Substitute Membership

Councillors June Ashworth, Abbott Bryning, Chris Coates, Jean Dent and Janie Kirkman

(iii) Queries regarding this Agenda

Please contact Gillian Noall, Head of Democratic Services - telephone: 01524 582060 or email gnoall@lancaster.gov.uk.

(iv) Changes to Membership, substitutions or apologies

Please contact Members' Secretary, telephone 582170, or alternatively email memberservices@lancaster.gov.uk.

MARK CULLINAN,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
TOWN HALL,
DALTON SQUARE,
LANCASTER LA1 1PJ

Published on 9th January 2008

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**Civic Programme - Reception for Overseas Students
17th January 2008****Report of Head of Democratic Services****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consider the future of the annual Reception for Overseas Students.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee consider the options in relation to the holding of a Civic Reception for Overseas Students.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Council, at its meeting on 6th December 2006, gave consideration to a number of events in the Civic Calendar, one of which was the annual Mayoral reception for Overseas Students.
- 1.2 Recent years have seen the number of students attending the event decline dramatically, with only one fifth of the number invited actually attending. For the last three years the event has been enhanced with the addition of Morris Dancers, which although popular have not encouraged any greater number to attend the event.
- 1.3 At the request of the Council Business Committee, contact was made with both Lancaster and Cumbria Universities to establish a working group to discuss the future of the event. Despite best attempts a meeting of the previous organisers of the event and the Student Union representatives from both Universities did not occur. In October 2007 a letter was sent to the Vice Chancellors of both Universities asking for their comments and views on the future of this event.
- 1.4 The letter sent to the Vice Chancellors included the views of the Council Business Committee of 13th September 2007, when the Committee had indicated that they were keen to have an event which would provide information on Council Services and which would be inclusive to all first year students. The options provided to the Vice Chancellors were to have:
 - (a) A reception for a limited time on a first come first served basis (in an evening);
or
 - (b) An open house event over a longer period (during an afternoon into the early evening).

To be held:

- (a) In December, prior to the search by students for housing in the district; or
- (b) In the summer term, prior to students preparing to move off campus.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 Due to the lack of clarity resulting from exchanges with the Universities to date, three possible options for the future of the event have been considered. These are

Option 1 – to continue with the Reception for Overseas Students in its current format

Option 2 – to continue with the Reception but extend the invitation to all first year students and vary the format aiming at providing information to students who are likely to be leaving the campus and moving to living independently in Lancaster or Morecambe.

Option 3 – to discontinue the event.

- 2.2 Option 1 would involve holding a reception for a maximum of 500 international students studying at both Lancaster and Cumbria Universities. The format for the event is an evening reception hosted by the Mayor with wine and soft drinks. For the past few years, there has also been the addition of Morris Dancers.

- 2.3 Option 2 would be to extend an invitation to all first year students attending Lancaster and Cumbria Universities. This could be held either on restricted basis in an evening on a first come first served basis, or as an open house over an afternoon/evening. By opening the event to more students over a longer period there would be an increase in room hire costs.

- 2.4 Option 3 would be to discontinue the event. The numbers attending have declined over recent years despite efforts to rejuvenate the event. The Council Business Committee seem keen to adapt the event to provide greater information to more students but neither University has provided overwhelming support for this change.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 The Universities of Lancaster and Cumbria were made aware of the views of the Council Business Committee and were asked to provide their comments or ideas on the proposals outlined in 1.3 above.

- 3.2 The University of Cumbria responded on 16 October 2007 stating that they would prefer to have a reception for international students at the University of Cumbria and that they could identify possibly 20 students who may be willing to attend.

- 3.3 The University of Lancaster responded on 21 December 2007 stating that they would support the continuation of a social event such as the reception for students and they could see that the integration of UK and international students in a joint social event would be appropriate. They have also stated that they would not be able to estimate how many students would wish to take up an invitation to such an event, and that perhaps the City Council should considering ensuring that first year postgraduate students are included as they are often living out in the community. They also feel that it is important that the City Council has a clear aim for the event in mind and the previous overseas receptions have always provided a pleasant welcome to the City and allowed students to engage with notions of Lancaster as a City and a tourist destination for themselves as well as friends and family.

3.4 As there is no clear way forward, both Universities have been advised that this matter will be put to this Committee and have been invited to send representatives to the meeting. Neither University have confirmed at this time whether anyone will be attending.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 The Reception for Overseas Students has been declining as an event for a number of years. Council, through the Civic Task Group and the Council Business Committee, have considered ways to rejuvenate and improve attendance but without more positive responses from the Universities the Officer view is that efforts are better focussed in engaging the Universities in other ways.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the annual Reception for Overseas Students is currently contained within the budget provided for Mayoral Functions and Hospitality. Should the event continue in some format it would expected that this would remain the case.

Discontinuing the event will allow the funding currently utilised for this event to be available for the enhancement of other events in the Mayoral calendar as agreed by Council in December 2006 following the review of the civic programme.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letters to the Vice Chancellors of the Universities of Lancaster and Cumbria dated 01 October 2007.
Letter from the University of Cumbria dated 16 October 2007.
Letter to the Universities of Lancaster and Cumbria dated 20 November 2007.
Letter from the University of Lancaster dated 21 December 2007.

Contact Officer: Lisa Jackson

Telephone: 01524 582070

E-mail: ljackson@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref:

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**H. M. Revenues and Customs – VAT Regulations
17th January 2008****Report of the Head of Democratic Services****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Members of a request from West Lothian Council seeking support for their position regarding changes in VAT regulations.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee consider whether this Council should support the motion passed by West Lothian Council regarding changes to VAT regulations affecting not for profit leisure trusts.

1.0 Report

The following has been received from West Lothian Council:

At the meeting of the Council held on 6th November 2007 the following Motion was unanimously agreed:

'West Lothian Council notes with extreme concern that Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs are imposing a tax change in VAT regulations which will add a substantial tax burden upon West Lothian Leisure and all other not for profit trusts providing leisure services, by requiring VAT to be levied on membership packages which include the use of health suite facilities such as saunas and steam rooms.

Council notes that as a direct result of these VAT changes West Lothian Leisure are facing an increased tax bill for the 2007/08 financial year of approximately £250,000 and that demands for repayment of past years' tax could escalate this figure towards, £1,000,000.

Council notes that West Lothian Leisure has acted to reduce this potential tax burden by withdrawing the use of health suite facilities from their membership packages with effect from 31st October and has also been forced to introduce a separate additional charge for the use of these facilities.

Council asserts that these tax changes are a direct attack on attempts to increase sports participation and will seriously undermine the development of a healthier, leaner

and fitter society, with, in particular, those who are in the lower socioeconomic groups being adversely affected.

Council therefore condemns the imposition of these tax changes, calls for the removal of this additional tax burden and resolves to:

- 1. write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor demanding the removal of this additional tax burden*
- 2. write to Lothian MPs seeking their support for the position of this Council*
- 3. write to the First Minister requesting the support of the Scottish Parliament for the removal of this additional burden*
- 4. circulate this motion to all local UK authorities seeking their support for the position of this council*
- 5. write to COSLA requesting their support for the position of this Council.*

The issue referred to appears not to be an actual change in VAT Regulations, but the result of a recent decision in the Court of Session, confirming that of a preceding VAT Tribunal, which provides clarification of existing Regulations.

It should be noted that, although the Motion focuses on Leisure Trusts, there are similar implications for services provided direct by a local authority.

This Council already treats such membership packages as standard rated, ie it is already complying with the Court's decision.

2.0 Options

The Terms of Reference of the Council Business Committee provide for this committee to determine the method of response and where necessary ratify responses on behalf of full Council to consultations.

Whilst a process is in place to deal with government and other consultation exercises in an efficient manner, Members may wish to consider these more 'ad hoc' issues promoted by other Local Authorities on a more individual basis.

The Committee is therefore requested to consider:

Option 1 – to agree with the motion put forward and offer support by writing to the Prime Minister and Chancellor.

Option 2 – to take no action

Option 3 – to refer the matter to full Council for a full debate by all members.

3.0 Conclusion

The Court's decision has no implications for this Council, because it already treats membership packages of this type as standard rated. Were the change requested by West Lothian Council to be made, then there would be some limited financial benefit to the Council, although this would be offset by a need for additional administrative input.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nothing material as a direct result of this report – see comments in paragraph 3.0.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter from West Lothian Council – 20th November 2007

Contact Officer: Gillian Noall
Telephone: 01524 582060
E-mail: gnoall@lancaster.gov.uk

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**Local Petitions and Calls for Action
- Consultation Response
17th January 2008****Report of the Head of Democratic Services****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To allow Members the opportunity to comment on a proposed consultation response relating to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) consultation on Local Petitions and Calls for Action.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the draft consultation response attached at Appendix A be approved for submission as the Council's response to the DCLG consultation exercise on Local Petitions and Calls for Action.**
- (2) That work on developing a process for dealing with Local Petitions and Calls for Action be included as part of the Democratic Renewal Phase 2 Report.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Governance of Britain Green Paper (July 2007), said that petitions can provide an important way for communities to express their views and generate local debate, boosting the relationship between residents and councils. It also announced the government's intention to consult on people's right to 'call for action' and the strengthened role of Councillors in that process.
- 1.2 This consultation seeks views on how arrangements for local petitions can be strengthened and how the new system might operate. It also seeks views on the Councillors' Call for Action, introduced under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 The Consultation which is aimed at citizens, local authorities, councillors and community organisations requests views on all the details in the proposals but particularly sets out a number of questions as follows:

- (a) The Government believes there should be a statutory duty on local authorities to respond to local petitions. What conditions must be met before a local authority is required to respond formally to a petition?
 - (b) In particular how should we define the level of support required before a petition must get a formal, substantive response?
 - By a fixed number of signatures,
 - By a percentage of the electorate in the area,
 - By a hybrid of the two,
 - Or in some other way?
 - (c) What, if any, matters should be excluded from the call for action?
 - (d) What guidance should Government provide on the operation of the councillor call for action?
 - (e) Taken together would petitions and calls for action sufficiently empower communities to intervene with their elected representatives? Should we contemplate other measures?
 - (f) Do you have other views on the operation of the new duty to respond to petitions and the call for action?
- 2.2 Officers have considered the content of the consultation document and in particular the questions set out above and have produced a draft response at Appendix A for Members' consideration.
- 2.3 The consultation document is available electronically as Appendix B to this report or a hard copy may be obtained from Democratic Services.
- 2.4 Members will be aware that this Council currently has provision for petitions and addresses to be made to full Council (Council Procedure Rules 13 and 14), which are used occasionally. Other petitions received by the Council have also been presented to the most appropriate decision making body in considering a particular issue on an ad hoc basis. There are however no specific advertised arrangements other than those relating to presentation at Council.
- 2.5 Whatever the outcome of the consultation exercise, this Council may wish to consider strengthening its current arrangements. The Local Governance Committee on 20th December agreed that officers should be requested to produce a Democratic Renewal Phase Two report in order to take forward the opportunities offered by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act and other governance and democracy issues (Minute 10 refers) and work on developing a process for dealing with Local Petitions and Calls for Action could be included as part of that report.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 The Terms of Reference of the Council Business Committee provide for this committee to determine the method of response and where necessary ratify responses on behalf of full Council to consultations.
- 3.2 The agreed process delegates to the Chief Executive the decision on whether or not the Council should respond to a consultation and the method of agreeing that response.

3.3 On this occasion it has been decided that a draft response be prepared by Officers for comments by this Committee.

3.4 Options available to the Committee are to approve or amend the proposed response attached at Appendix A.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Officers have prepared a draft response for approval or amendment to enable a response to be submitted to the DCLG by the deadline of 20th March 2008.

4.2 Whatever the outcome of the consultation exercise, this Council may wish to consider strengthening its current arrangements and it is suggested that work on developing a process for dealing with Local Petitions and Calls for Action could be included as part of a planned Democratic Renewal Phase Two report.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report. Any financial implications as a result of proposals for change will be included in future reports.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report. Any proposals for change whether as a result of new legislation or in response to the Council's desire for improvement will include any necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	Contact Officer: Gillian Noall
DCLG consultation document dated 27 th December 2007.	Telephone: 01524 582060
	E-mail: gnoall@lancaster.gov.uk



Contact: Gillian Noall
 Telephone: (01524) 582060
 Fax: (01524) 582161
 Minicom: (01524) 582175
 E-mail: gnoall@lancaster.gov.uk
 Website: www.lancaster.gov.uk
 Our Ref: GMN
 Your Ref:



Ms Rosie Milner
 Communities and Local Government
 5th Floor, Zone F8
 Eland House
 Bressenden Place
 London
 SW1E 5DU

Chief Executive

Mark Cullinan

Town Hall
 Dalton Square
 LANCASTER LA1 1PJ

DX63531 Lancaster

18th January 2008

Dear Ms Milner

LOCAL PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION CONSULTATION

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. The consultation document was considered by the Council Business Committee on 17th January 2008 and the response of Lancaster City Council is set out below.

Lancaster City Council firmly supports the Government's initiatives to empower communities. The City Council welcomes the intention of the Secretary of State to formalise the process regarding the submission of petitions and create a duty on local authorities to respond. Whilst the City Council takes petitions very seriously and there is a formal process in place for petitions and addresses to be presented to full Council this is not well developed and has rarely been used for the submission of a petition, nor for a Councillor to take up a cause on behalf of a local community.

The Council would support the principle that the subject of petitions should be broad, as set out in paragraph 19a and not just limited to local authorities statutory duties, as this fits well with the Council's ambitions in terms of community leadership and place shaping.

Organiser-of-Record

Again we would support the principle that the organiser-of-record of local petitions should be a local person. In terms of this definition we would propose the adoption of the following:

- a person appearing in the electoral register for the local authority's area
- any adult who works in the area at the time the petition is submitted.
- children and young people who live or attend full time education in the area at the time the petition is submitted.

The Council believes that the definition as set out above is open whilst protecting the 'local' nature of petitions. The Council notes that whilst it would be difficult beyond reasonable doubt to substantiate the eligibility of the last two clauses, it is our belief that on balance this offers a reasonable approach, whilst ensuring inclusivity. The Council does not support option (c) which

proposes a 'qualifying period' which would be difficult to verify and is unnecessarily bureaucratic.

Levels of Support

The Council supports the principle that the level of support required for a petition would best be expressed in terms of:

- an absolute number or a given proportion of the population, whichever is lower.

The Council believes that the example of 200 or 5% of the **relevant** population offers a reasonable threshold which does not discriminate against small communities. The Council proposes the use of census figures to determine the relevant population threshold, which includes those not on the electoral roll e.g. children and young people. These figures are also readily available.

The Council does not support an absolute number which would discriminate against small communities or a proportion of the electorate which would discriminate against those not on the electoral roll and involve time and resources in obtaining this information

Signatures

In order to ensure simplicity the signatures on local petitions should be the same criteria that is adopted for the organiser-of-record, therefore our proposal would be:

- a person appearing in the electoral register for the local authority's area
- any adult who works in the area at the time the petition is submitted.
- children and young people who live or attend full time education in the area at the time the petition is submitted.

In terms of validity the Council would support the principle that signatures should be collected within 12 months of the date of the first signature. The Council would at this stage support that petitions are restricted to paper based documents containing the Signature, Date and **Qualifying** and home address of petitioners. At present it is felt difficult if not impossible to verify the authenticity of electronic petitioners with greater opportunities for abuse of the system, the Council is of the view that this should be linked to the proposals regarding declaration of voters and the same principles applied where possible.

The Council supports the principle that local authorities should be able to accept signatures without further validation; but should be empowered to investigate if they felt necessary, and to strike them out if appropriate. Experience from petitions for the creation of town and parish councils has proven that validation is an onerous and resource intensive process.

Presentation of Petitions

The Council would support that each Council should have the duty of specifying in their constitution the process for the presentation of petitions. There is merit in the options being retained of presentation to a Councillor or Council/ Committee meeting (as specified in the constitution) which would enable the Organiser-of-Record to approach a Councillor if they did not feel able to present the petition at a meeting. The Council would further propose that Councillors should have the option of agreeing or declining to accept a petition, but where they have agreed to accept a petition there is a duty on them to present the petition to the next

available Council meeting (as specified in the constitution). This is important, in order to ensure that petitions are properly recorded, tracked and the duty to respond complied with.

The Council believes this is important as the petition may be on an issue which the Councillor feels for moral, religious or political reasons they do not wish to be associated, this does not affect the right of the Organiser-of-Record to approach a different Councillor or to present the petition themselves.

Outcomes

The Council would support Councils having a menu of options as to the way they could decide to deal with a petition once presented, they should include:

- The referral to a Committee
- The referral to Overview and Scrutiny for investigation (equating to a Call for Action)
- A report on the issues prepared by officers for consideration.
- Other course of action

The Council would also support a duty being placed upon Councils to specify to the Organiser-of-Record when they will receive a response to the issue they have raised.

Councillor Call for Action Excluded Matters and Guidance

In effect Overview and Scrutiny at Lancaster City Council has for the last four years allowed Councillors to trigger informal calls for action through requesting Overview and Scrutiny to consider and look at an issue. Overview and Scrutiny then considers the issue and if it decides not to investigate gives the reasons for this and consequently has some experience in already operating informal 'Excluded Matters'. The Council would suggest from its experience the following should constitute Excluded Matters:

- Planning decisions and items which may be brought for decision.
- Licensing decisions and items which may be brought for decision.
- Audit process and items which are likely to be considered by the Audit process.
- Standards decisions and items which may be brought for decision.
- Appeals decisions and items which may be brought for decision.
- Matters within the proper remit of the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers.
- Breaches of the Constitution and its protocols e.g. Code of Conduct etc.
- Matters relating to the terms and conditions of employment or conduct of individual or groups of staff or Members.
- Matters relating to a particular identifiable service recipient or potential service recipient.
- Complaints or matters before the courts or local government Ombudsman.
- Contractual matters, other than performance monitoring and review.

The Council believe it would be helpful if the Secretary of State provided minimum standards to be observed with regard to the Councillor Call for Action, which allowed local authorities flexibility to tailor this to their own Overview and Scrutiny processes.

Overall Conclusions

The Council believes that petitions and Councillor Call for Action are but parts of the democratic process and need to be considered alongside existing engagement mechanisms such as public speaking at meetings, the right to attend meetings, consultation, co-option, stakeholder engagement, appointments to Standards Committees and Independent Remuneration Panels

etc. as well as the proposals being brought forward with regard to community engagement, neighbourhood governance and devolution. The Council would suggest that the Secretary of State may wish to issue guidance to encourage Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consult the public with regard to potential issues for their annual work programmes, in addition to advertising the greater use of a better defined petitioning process.

Yours sincerely

CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Local petitions and Calls for Action Consultation



Local petitions and Calls for Action Consultation

Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 020 7944 4400
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

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Preface

This Government is determined to breathe new life into local democracy. That means giving elected local councillors the space to show a lead: less red tape from Whitehall and more freedom to spend money on local priorities. But it also means giving local people new opportunities to set the agenda for themselves, to have their say about local services and get things done on the issues they care about. Whether it's improving housing, cleaning up the streets, or getting tough with anti-social behaviour, it's often local people themselves who understand the problem best and can come up with the best solutions.

We've taken big steps towards 'devolution to the doorstep' in recent years. The 2006 Local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* made clear that new discretion for town halls needed to go hand in hand with greater accountability to local people. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provided a vital framework – a duty on local authorities to inform, consult and involve local people in their decisions and services, and new powers for local councillors to call for action on a broad range of local issues.

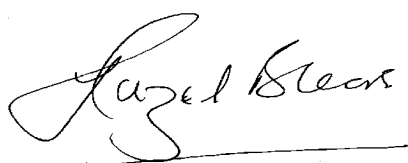
Today, we want to go further still. In *The Governance of Britain* the Prime Minister launched a national conversation about renewing our democracy, including at the local level; and in October, I published an *Action Plan for Community Empowerment*, setting out what my Department is doing to give people a real say over their neighbourhood.

This consultation takes forward one of the commitments in that plan – to look carefully at the idea of placing a duty on local authorities to respond constructively to the petitions they receive from local people.

We in the UK are some of Europe's biggest petition writers. People use petitions as a way to raise local issues they really care about – speed bumps, local shops, social care. Many local authorities already deal with petitions systematically, scrupulously and fairly.

But I want everyone, no matter where they live, to have the confidence of knowing that their concerns will be taken seriously. I believe that there is a case for acting to ensure that standards everywhere are brought up to those of the best, and am inclined to put all authorities on the same footing by providing a legislative framework for dealing with local petitions. I want to give people the chance to help shape that framework before reaching a conclusion on the best way forward.

I look forward to hearing your views.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hazel Blears". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath.

**Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP,
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. The Governance of Britain Green Paper, published in July 2007, said that petitions can provide an important way for local communities to express their views collectively and generate local debate, and improve the connection between residents and local authorities. It added that the Government is considering the introduction of a duty requiring local authorities to consider and investigate petitions from local communities, and guarantee a response on the issues which have been raised.
2. In the Green Paper, the Government also announced its intention to consult on extending the right of people to intervene with their elected representatives through community rights to call for action.
3. This consultation paper seeks views on:
 - how the arrangements for local petitions can be strengthened and the details of how the new system might operate
 - the call for action introduced under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
4. This consultation does not cover petitions to the House of Commons or the Government, which are dealt with separately in paragraphs 157 to 163 of the Governance of Britain.

Chapter 2

The consultation criteria

5. The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations on the basis of a document in electronic or printed form. They will often be relevant to other sorts of consultation. Though they have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (eg under European Community Law), they should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.
 - Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy
 - Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses
 - Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible
 - Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy
 - Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator
 - Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.
6. The full consultation code may be viewed at: http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/consultation/consultation_guidance/index.asp
7. Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not, or if you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process please contact:

Albert Joyce,
Communities and Local Government Consultation Co-ordinator
Zone 6/H10
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

or by email to albert.joyce@communities.gsi.gov.uk

8. Please note that responses to the consultation itself should be sent to the contact shown within the main body of the consultation (page 17).
9. A summary of responses to this consultation will be published by 12 June 2008 (within three months of end of consultation period) at the address below.

www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/publications/consultations/

Paper copies will be available on request.

10. Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).
11. If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.
12. The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and, in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Chapter 3

Local petitions

Evidence for change

13. There is evidence that a formal process for handling petitions adds value to public life. In 2005, 38 per cent of respondents to the Citizenship Survey said they had undertaken a civic activity. 60 per cent of them claimed that they had signed a petition in the previous twelve months. Petitioning was the most commonly undertaken of the nine activities grouped under civic engagement for the purposes of this survey.
14. Qualitative research in 2006 found that participants felt that petitions were a good method for bringing issues to the attention of local government. However, they were sceptical about local government's ability or willingness to act on or be responsive to petitions¹.
15. Overall, research indicates that responsiveness is a key element to petitions' political efficacy, whether in the form of a formal response from the governance body concerned, or of a referendum or ballot to decide the issue.
16. Petitioning is used in a number of countries as a trigger leading to electoral action, typically in the form of a referendum – Switzerland and the USA are typical examples. These can be either citizens' initiatives or popular referendums. In some instances, the referendums are binding. Petitions can also be used to initiate recall ballots. This system is used in the USA (at state and local/municipal levels), and in British Columbia, Canada.
17. Other jurisdictions, for example Scotland and Queensland, have formal petitioning systems which do not lead to ballots. Instead, the petitioner can expect a response from either the relevant committee or MP. In these examples, a response is not guaranteed.
18. Political parties and campaign groups in countries where petitioning is a well-established feature of the democratic landscape have become adept at using petitions to further their own agendas. They can also counteract a petition campaign, either through developing a counter proposal or by demobilising support for the petition. The evidence therefore indicates that petitioning (as a tool of direct democracy), can support representative democracy.

¹ BMG, 2006

General principles underpinning a new duty

19. The Government believes that there should be a duty on local authorities to respond to petitions in the following circumstances:

(a) The subject of the petition relates to the functions of the local authority, or other public services with shared delivery responsibilities with the local authority through the Local Area Agreement or other partnership arrangement

20. Local authorities have a wide range of functions, which include the promotion of the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of the area and its people. They are the “place shapers” for their area, and this has been reinforced by provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which require a long list of partner organisations to cooperate with the local authority in developing the Sustainable Community Strategy for the area, and in setting local improvement targets. The role of local authorities has also been reinforced by the Sub National Review published in July 2007.
21. The Government’s proposal is that local authorities should be required to respond to any petition that asks them to consider any issue which falls within their broad functions as outlined above. Petitions which would more properly be dealt with by another public body – and raise issues which relate neither to local improvement targets agreed by that body, nor to the area’s sustainable community strategy – would fall outside the proposed new duty.
22. An important example of this principle will arise in the context of education services. A local authority would not be required to respond to a petition which raises issues which can only be addressed substantively by the governors and head-teacher of a particular school. On the other hand, the duty would apply where the petition relates to the education functions of the local authority.

(b) The petition has been organised by a local person

23. It is proposed that there should be nothing to prevent local petitioners from invoking the help of national organisations having wider interests – but that the organiser-of-record of a local petition should be a local person. It is that person who should present the petition to the local authority. We would welcome views about how “local person” should be defined. Obvious options are:
- (a) a person appearing in the electoral register for the local authority’s area
 - (b) any adult who lives or works in the area at the time the petition is submitted, or
 - (c) any adult who has lived or worked in the area for at least a qualifying period of time before the petition is submitted.

24. Options (b) and (c) might both be extended to anyone who attends a school or college in the area, in order to make this form of engagement available to children. We would welcome respondents' views on that possibility.

(c) The petition demonstrates a sufficient level of support from local people

25. On the one hand, requiring local authorities to respond to all petitions, even those with a minimum level of support, could impose unnecessary processes and costs. On the other, setting a very high level of support as a requirement for a petition to receive a formal response would frustrate the underlying purpose of the policy. There are three possible approaches to setting a threshold of a sufficient level of support. They are to define:
- in absolute terms the number of relevant signatories that a qualifying petition must have (for example, "at least 250 signatures"); or
 - a qualifying petition as one that has the signatures of a given proportion of those whose signatures are regarded as relevant (for example, at least 1 per cent of the electorate of the area in question). This could make it difficult for the petition organiser to know how many signatures were required for the petition to be valid; or
 - an absolute number, or a given proportion of the population, whichever is the lower (for example. "200 signatures or 5 per cent of the population" would mean that communities of less than 4,000 people would have to find fewer than 200 signatures).

Signatures

26. In the above options, a "relevant" signature could be regarded as that either of:
- (a) an elector of the area; or
 - (b) anyone who lives or works in the area.

Support would have to be reasonably current (eg signature within the last 12 months).

27. We would, in either case, want to consider options for extending the range of relevant signatures to local children who either live in the area, or attend school there. We would welcome respondents' views on that possibility.
28. Support for petitions might take the traditional form (signature, date, and address), but we would want to allow for electronic petitions too, and would be glad to have respondents' views on how they might work.
29. We believe local authorities should be entitled to accept signatures without further validation if they have no reason to doubt them; but should be empowered to investigate if they felt it necessary, and to strike them out if appropriate.

(d) The petition satisfies minimum requirements in relation to

i) The manner in which it was submitted

ii) its form

iii) its content

30. It is proposed that petitioners ought to be able to present their petitions either to the council, or to one of its councillors.

31. Councils and their councillors would be under a general duty to consider whether any request or document they receive is a petition. We would hope to avoid technicalities here. The word “petition” would, we hope, have a plain English meaning; we would probably not seek to define it in statute. Where a council or councillor is of the view that a document is a petition, that decision would trigger the petition provisions.

32. We take the view that a petition should at least contain:

(a) the proposition which it promotes

(b) the name and address of the organiser

(c) the local authority from which a response is sought (and, if more than one, all the local authorities to which it has been submitted)

(d) the area to which it relates (ie the whole authority, or a defined area forming part of it)

(e) the names, addresses and signatures of those who support it (or, in the case of an electronic petition, their names, addresses and email addresses).

Guidance

33. We believe that the Secretary of State should have the power to issue guidance about all aspects of the process.

Chapter 4

Calls for action

The Councillors' Call for Action

34. In the recent Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Parliament amended section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 – before, indeed, it had come into force – to align it with the provision in section 119 of the 2007 Act. All councillors are thus empowered to refer local government matters and local crime and disorder matters for consideration by the relevant overview and scrutiny committees of their local authorities.
35. The result amounts to a **“councillor call for action”**. Any councillor will be able to refer a local matter affecting his or her ward or division to the appropriate overview and scrutiny committee of his or her authority. In the case of a local crime and disorder matter, that will be to the authority's crime and disorder committee.
36. The committee is required then to put the matter on its agenda, and discuss it at a meeting. It is not to be required to take any further action; but all the powers it has – to mount inquiries, to require information, and to make reports and recommendations – are to be available to it, if it decides to take the matter up.
37. The power to refer a matter is available only where the matter is of direct concern to the ward or division which the councillor represents. A councillor can refer a matter even if no citizen has asked him or her to consider it. There is no requirement for councillors in multi-member wards to agree – any of them can refer a matter.
38. A local government matter, in relation to a member of a local authority, is defined as a matter which:
 - (a) relates to the discharge of any function of the authority
 - (b) affects all or part of the electoral area for which the member is elected or any person who lives or works in that area, and
 - (c) is not an excluded matter.

A local crime and disorder matter, in relation to a member of a local authority, has been defined to mean a matter concerning:

- (a) crime and disorder (including in particular forms of crime and disorder that involve anti-social behaviour or other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), or
- (b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

that affects the electoral area represented by the member, or the people who live or work in that area.

39. It will no doubt happen that some local issues have implications in more than one field. The Government's view is that, in such a case, the councillor would be entitled to refer it to every overview and scrutiny committee which covers some aspect of the issue. In practice, committees will, no doubt, take the sensible decision to join forces in order to consider such matters in the round.

Excluded matters

40. The Secretary of State has power to exclude by order specified descriptions of matter that would otherwise be "local government matters". This was included primarily so that confusion could be avoided between calls for action and well-defined statutory processes such as planning and licensing appeals. We now wish, as part of this consultation, to seek views about exactly what ought to be excluded, and why.

Guidance

41. The Secretary of State is empowered to issue statutory guidance for local authorities, their committees, and their members. She intends to do so when these measures are brought into force. Respondents are invited to highlight the key issues on which guidance (whether statutory or not), would be helpful.

Empowering communities to call for action

42. In the *Governance of Britain* green paper, Government highlighted its desire to achieve greater direct empowerment of communities, and undertook to consult on a number of areas, including "extending the right of people to intervene with their elected representatives through community rights to call for action".

43. Having established a *councillor* call for action (in law, if not yet in practice), we take the view that a duty on local authorities to respond to qualifying local petitions would amount to a *community* call for action – albeit a call made by a community of interest. We should, however, like to hear views on whether other steps should be considered as well.

Chapter 5

Consultation questions

44. We wish to take the views of citizens, local authorities, councillors and community organisations on all the details of the proposals set out in this document, but particularly on the following questions.

Petitions

- (a) The Government believes there should be a statutory duty on local authorities to respond to local petitions. What conditions must be met before a local authority is required to respond formally to a petition? (*Paragraph 19*)
- (b) In particular, how should we define the level of support required before a petition must get a formal, substantive response?
- By a fixed number of signatures?
 - By a percentage of the electorate in the area?
 - By a hybrid of the two?
 - Or in some other way? (*Paragraph 25*)

Calls for action

- (d) What if any matters should be excluded from the call for action? (*Paragraph 40*)
- (e) What guidance should Government provide on the operation of the councillor call for action? (*Paragraph 41*)

Overall

- (f) Taken together, would petitions and calls for action sufficiently empower communities to intervene with their elected representatives? Should we contemplate other measures? (*Paragraph 43*)
- (g) Do you have other views on the operation of the new duty to respond to petitions and the call for action?

Chapter 6

How to submit your views

Responses from individuals and organisations may be submitted in writing to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Comments should be received no later than 20 March 2008 and should be sent to:

Rosie Milner
Communities and Local Government
5th floor, Zone F8
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

or emailed to:

petitions@communities.gsi.gov.uk

The consultation document and its response form can be downloaded from the consultations page on the Communities and Local Government website (www.communities.gov.uk). For details of how to order hard copies see the inside front cover.

This consultation is available on request in alternative formats.

We may publish or make public the responses and comments received. If you do not consent to this, you must clearly request that your response be treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in email responses will not be treated as such a request.

If you wish your response, if published, to be unattributable, please let us know when you send it to us. Unattributable responses may also be included in any statistical summary of comments received and views expressed.

Next steps

The consultation will run until 20 March 2008. Once this deadline has passed, Government will consider the responses received by that date and issue a report on the consultation by 12 June 2008.

Regulatory Impact Assessment

An Impact Assessment has not been produced as the cost to the public sector is likely to be less than £5 million per annum and the impact on the private and third sectors is likely to be negligible and currently unquantifiable. We would welcome suggestions as to how such impacts might be determined and will consider the need for an Impact Assessment as we take this policy forward.

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**North West Development Agency Draft Corporate Plan –
Consultation Response
17th January 2008****Report of the Head of Democratic Services****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To allow Members the opportunity to comment on a proposed consultation response relating to the North West Development Agency (NWDA) Draft Corporate Plan.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the draft consultation response attached at Appendix A be approved for submission as the Council's response to the NWDA consultation exercise on its draft Corporate Plan.
- (2) That it be noted that the points raised in the draft response have been forwarded to the Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP) as this Council's contribution to an overall response and any amendments agreed at this meeting will be reported to the LEP meeting on 21st January 2008.

1.0 Report

- 1.1 The NWDA is currently drawing up a new Corporate Plan, setting out plans for delivering their contribution to the Regional Economic Strategy and their wider remit on behalf of the Northwest for the period from 2008/09 to 2010/11.
- 1.2 The new Corporate Plan will cover a period of considerable change for NWDA, following their submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review when the Northwest argued for a number of significant improvements to how Economic Development priorities are agreed and delivered. The new expectations and responsibilities which it has set out for NWDA from 2009 onwards are as follows:
 - Working on the region's behalf to prepare an integrated strategy, bringing together housing, planning, transport and economic priorities to provide an integrated approach to economic, social and environmental priorities;
 - An overarching regional sustainable growth objective, to ensure investment can be as focussed as possible;

- Increased delegation of project approval decisions to the most appropriate local level, with delivery contracted on the basis of agreed programmes and priorities;
 - Responsibility for overseeing the delivery of further simplification of business support, with strong regional delivery of business support products to ensure high standards and lack of duplication.
- 1.3 The NWDA has also agreed tough efficiency targets with Government to do more, but with less resource and the plan is intended to set a clear strategic direction to enable this to be achieved.
- 1.4 The plan sets out 11 strategic objectives, with funding and outcomes identified for each.
- 1.5 The Agency's Board has considered this draft plan and is now requesting specific feedback and comments on it by no later than **Friday 1st February 2008** in order that the revised plan can be submitted to Government and Ministerial approval obtained by the end of March.
- 1.6 The Head of Economic Development and Tourism has considered the content of the draft Plan and is producing a draft response. This will be published as at Appendix A to the report for Members' consideration as soon as it is available.
- 1.7 The draft Corporate Plan is available electronically as Appendix B to this report or a hard copy may be obtained from Democratic Services.
- 1.8 It should also be noted that the LEP intends to submit an overall response for the Partnership and in order to meet their deadline the observations raised in the draft response have been forwarded to the LEP for inclusion. Any amendments agreed by this meeting will be forwarded to the LEP who will be discussing and agreeing their response at the LEP Forum meeting on 21st January 2008.

2.0 Options

- 2.1 The Terms of Reference of the Council Business Committee provide for this committee to determine the method of response and where necessary ratify responses on behalf of full Council to consultations.
- 2.2 The agreed process delegates to the Chief Executive the decision on whether or not the Council should respond to a consultation and the method of agreeing that response.
- 2.3 On this occasion it has been decided that a draft response be prepared by Officers for comments by this Committee.
- 2.4 Options available to the Committee are to approve or amend the proposed response attached at Appendix A.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 Officers have prepared a draft response for approval or amendment to enable a response to be submitted to the NWDA by the deadline of 1st February 2008. The points raised in this response will also be forwarded to the LEP for inclusion in an overall response from that partnership.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report. If any indirect financial implications become apparent following the preparation of a draft response these will be included in a supplementary report

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments at this stage. Consideration will be given to any additional further financial implications highlighted if necessary.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NWDA Consultation Document dated 10th December 2007
Letter from LEP requesting comments dated 31st December 2007.

Contact Officer: Gillian Noall
Telephone: 01524 582060
E-mail: gnoall@lancaster.gov.uk

LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL**NORTHWEST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY CORPORATE PLAN 2008-2011 – CONSULTATION RESPONSE****January 2008**

The City Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on NWDA's Corporate Plan and, in broad terms, supports the Plan's overall direction and the specified corporate objectives. As a general principle, we very much welcome the Government's proposals in the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration but appreciate that this leads us all into a period of change. We therefore emphasise the importance of consultation and involvement of Local Authority and other partners in the development of new ways of working together in the interests of the region. We look forward to making a positive contribution to this process over the coming years.

With regard to the Corporate Plan there are a number of specific points we wish to make:

1. Delegating decisions and programme approach

In line with the Sub National Review, we strongly support the move towards a programme rather than a project approach and the delegation of more responsibility for project funding decisions to local authorities or sub-regions. Reference is made at several points in the document to this new approach (eg under 3. Policy Context), but it is not entirely clear at what level NWDA sees this delegation taking place. Within the principles of the SNR, we believe that such delegation should be to the level most appropriate to economic and geographic circumstances and at which effective programme delivery is optimised. We would suggest that in some circumstance this might be to the level of a single local authority or Vision Board. As an example, Lancaster District is a relatively self-contained area and is one of the five recognised sub-areas within the Lancashire Economic Strategy. Consequently, a programme approach would be very appropriate for delivery of the Lancaster & Morecambe Vision. We would, therefore, hope that NWDA will seek to be flexible in its delegation arrangements and consider the potential to apply the programme approach to Vision Boards in particular.

2. Outputs

We welcome the rationale, under 'Setting NWDA priorities for investment', for development of a range of outputs to monitor progress on outcome delivery. However, we have some concerns on how this would work in practice, especially in linking outputs back to GVA/head for certain areas of activity, for example public realm. We would wish to see additional information, and perhaps consultation, as the outputs are developed.

3. Growth sectors

We feel some clarification is needed regarding target sectors in the section on Growth Sectors. The sectors listed under outcomes appear to be those which 'contribute to widespread employment' and include those (retail, construction, distribution) which are very reliant on the performance of other sectors of the economy. Whilst there may be a cross-reference to the Regional Economic Strategy, we feel there would be merit in reiterating, under Outcomes, the key internationally

competitive sectors such as digital and creative industries and energy and environmental technologies.

We also note the reference in the final bullet point under 'Activity' to public realm and the built and natural environment. This is important to coastal and heritage towns such as Morecambe and Lancaster and perhaps there should be reference to the NWDA work related to Coastal Resorts and Historic Towns and Cities

4. Enterprise support

We note the reference to the targeted nature of the Regional Start Up and Survivability project and would restate our view that there should be a universal one-to-one counselling service for all who seek such support, with enhanced and proactive support for under-represented groups. The current position has the effect of denying one-to-one counselling for, among others, males in the most deprived areas of Lancaster District including wards/SOAs in Morecambe which are among the most deprived nationally. It also seems contradictory that the RES is a growth focused strategy and yet support for business start up and entrepreneurship is being targeted away from areas such as Lancaster which have greatest potential for such growth. It also runs contrary to the objectives of the Lancashire LAA, which seeks to improve business start up activity for **all** residents of the county.

Whilst we recognise this is an approach that NWDA are firmly committed to, we would suggest that there is a need for some independent evaluation to assess the impact on business start up activity outside the targeted areas, and an appropriate review.

We welcome the Finance for Business programme and its aim to improve the availability of, and access to, finance for SMEs. This is a barrier which has been highlighted through the Lancaster and Morecambe Vision Board, and also InfoLab21 Advisory Group, but it will be essential that any additional finance is attractive to businesses, and especially high growth businesses, and that it is actively marketed if take-up is to be improved.

5. Competitive Business & Innovation

We welcome recognition of the continuing need to ensure availability of globally competitive broadband infrastructure and services. However, we would suggest that the reference to ICT support being focused on places currently experiencing low rates of broadband coverage, ICT adoption and exploitation, should be extended to include reference to opportunities to develop leading edge ICT networks which are capable of driving content development. We would also wish to see reference to support for sector networks and demonstrator projects to encourage adoption of new technologies.

6. Higher Level Skills Development

We are surprised there is no reference to graduate retention activities as this is critical if increases in student numbers are to impact on regional growth. It also underlines the importance of investment in science parks as a means of generating jobs attractive to graduates.

7. Size of the Workforce

We note with some concern the statement that ‘a large proportion of investment in this area will be focused to achieve the outcomes outlined in the three City Employment Strategies.’ The funding allocated to this objective is relatively limited and we would wish to ensure adequate funding is available to ensure a meaningful programme of worklessness activity can be undertaken throughout Lancashire. We would also wish to see some reference to the evaluation of worklessness activity to date and the potential to roll-out activity which has been shown to be most effective.

8. Employment Sites and Premises

We would expect to see the full list of strategic sites, including Lancaster Science Park, rather than a selected list. The subsequent comments in the Plan regarding potential NWDA support for delivery capacity is particularly important in this context to enable major projects to be developed to the point of implementation.

9. Conditions for Private Sector Investment

This is a critical objective for Lancaster District. We welcome the acknowledgement of public realm and regional parks. However, we feel there should at least be reference to the Coastal Resorts strategy and the potential impact on coastal towns of investment in public realm improvements.

We also welcome the reference to rural key centres but, in the absence of any statement regarding the priority that will be given to rural areas generally within the Corporate Plan, we are concerned that adequate resources would be available.

10. Climate change

We would suggest the possible inclusion of recognition of the need to monitor potential changes in the nuclear energy sector. We would also propose the inclusion of innovative pilot projects under Resulting Activity.

11. Rural matters

We note the reference to rural affairs being integrated and mainstreamed into the corporate plan (under Sustainable Development). However, we feel there is scope for the corporate plan to include a statement of NWDA’s approach to rural matters, including reference to its role in delivery of the Rural Development Programme for England.

Draft Corporate Plan 2008-2011

December 2007

Northwest Regional Development Agency Corporate Plan 2008-2011

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DRAFT

1. Executive Summary

The Northwest Regional Development Agency exists to lead the sustainable economic growth¹ of England's Northwest. The region has agreed a strategic vision, clear priorities and targets through the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The RES also sets out the actions which the region has agreed are vital to delivering its vision at regional, sub-regional and local level. It therefore provides the overarching context for all the Agency's activities.

The Agency contributes to these RES actions directly through its own investment programme with partners and by using its strategic influence and responsibilities to lead and align the work of private and public sector partners with specific responsibility for delivering specific actions.

The Agency's role is to provide strategic leadership to ensure that the region as a whole prioritises actions and achieves sustainable economic development through implementation of the RES.

The NWDA has made excellent progress over the period 2005/8 against its last Corporate Plan. This was refreshed in the light of the updated RES in 2006. In particular real progress has been made on a range of those actions which the region agreed would have the most transformational impact. This includes the mediacity:uk development, the creation of Business Link Northwest, the opening of the University of Cumbria and the launch of the Climate Change Action Plan. This Corporate Plan sets out the next stage of NWDA's development, enhancing its strategic and commissioning role and delegating delivery and project decision making to sub-regional and local organisations.

This Plan is NWDA's response to the changes announced by Government in the Comprehensive Spending Review and Sub National Review (SNR); in which Government set out proposals to:

- Ensure that all localities and regions have the opportunities for sustainable economic growth.
- Encourage greater joint working across Local Authority boundaries in sub and city regions.
- Integrate the range of regional strategies (economic (RES), spatial including transport (RSS) and housing (RHS) into a Single Regional Strategy. Regional Development Agencies will have executive responsibility to work with partners and developing these strategies on behalf of each region. There will be an enhanced role for Local Authorities, who will be fully involved in strategy development, sign them off and scrutinise their implementation.
- Ensure decisions are taken and delivery managed at the most appropriate level, with RDAs moving more to a programme rather than project approach and delegating more responsibility for project funding decisions to local authorities or sub regions.

¹ Sustainable growth' here and throughout this document refers to economic growth which can be sustained and is within environmental limits, but also enhances the environment and social welfare, and avoids greater extremes in future economic cycles.

Government is setting a minimum growth objective (GVA/head) for each region, to support delivery of the Regional Economic Performance Public Sector Agreement (REP PSA) target. This objective will be embedded within the Single Regional Strategy and built into RDA Corporate Plans. Government recognises that overall growth rates are significantly influenced by international and national factors/decisions as well as investment decisions taken within the region. Government has also replaced the current RDA Tasking Framework and will instead monitor RDAs against the delivery of their Corporate Plans. Government will monitor the progress of regional economies against the GVA/head objective and five outcome focused indicators – GVA/hour worked; Employment rates; Basic, Intermediate and Higher Level Skills rates; R&D as a percentage of GDP; and Business Start up rates. RDA's Corporate Plans must show how they contribute to this growth objective as well as to the principles of Sustainable Development and Economic Opportunity for All.

This Corporate Plan covers the period 2008/09 to 2010/11 and therefore sets out how the Agency will:

- Continue to deliver the Regional Economic Strategy (RES)
- Contribute to delivery of the regional growth objective and Regional Economic Performance Public Service Agreement (REP PSA²)
- Implement new responsibilities and duties arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement and Review of Sub-National Economic Development

RES 2006 already sets a GVA growth target for the region, and this Corporate Plan therefore sets out objectives consistent with achieving a GVA/head growth rate of 1.9 – 2.3% per annum. The lower end of this range is the likely Government minimum objective and the higher end is consistent with the aspiration set out in the RES.

The Northwest economy has performed well over the last few years, but all the evidence suggests that maintaining growth in the next few years is going to be tougher for the region. The longer-term impact of the credit crisis nationally and its impacts regionally; high oil and foodstuffs prices, and their disproportionate effect on the Northwest due to the size and nature of our manufacturing sector are all factors. Tighter controls on government spending nationally could also have a greater impact on the Northwest due to the importance of public sector employment. The demographics of an ageing population and reduction of the working age population will also be important.

NWDA has agreed to high efficiency savings as part of its CSR settlement and its overall budget will be reduced by around 5% per annum over the coming years. This means that the resources available to invest in supporting projects and programmes will reduce from their current annual level of £399m to £338m by 2010/11. Given the growth objective set out above, the challenging economic conditions and the reduced resources available, this plan has therefore been developed to support tough choices over the next three years. A summary of the expected total income and expenditure over the life of this plan is over the page.

² This PSA is "To make sustainable improvements in the economic performance of all English regions, and over the long-term reduce the persistent gap in the growth rate between the regions".

Income and Expenditure Summary

Financial Year	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m
Grant in Aid	391.6	386.5	377.4
EU Programme	212.2	86.5	72.3
Other	56.9	28.9	19.4
Total Income	660.7	501.8	469.1
Expenditure			
EU Programme	211.0	85.3	71.1
NWDA Programme	390.6	358.2	338.5
Overheads	53.8	52.8	52.8
Irrecoverable VAT	5.3	5.5	6.7
Total Expenditure	660.7	501.8	469.1

The Agency's Board has therefore agreed 11 corporate objectives based on the RES and designed to improve competitiveness and productivity across the region's Business, People and Places. The NWDA is now consulting on these across regional partners. They reflect the totality of NWDA's responsibilities, and focus on delivery of the specific actions in the Regional Economic Strategy on which NWDA leads delivery. These are summarised below:

Competitive Business	
1	Support the development of internationally competitive sectors
2	Improve the formation, survival and growth rates of enterprises
3	Develop higher added value activity through innovation
4	Realise opportunities from globalisation
Competitive People	
5	Develop leadership and management skills in the current workforce
6	Develop intermediate and higher level skills in the current workforce
7	Grow the size of the workforce
Competitive Places	
8	Support the development of major employment sites and premises
9	Improve the physical conditions for private sector investment
10	Ensure the implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan
11	Improve the image of the region to businesses and visitors

Against each objective, this Plan sets out the specific rationale for our investment and the main outcomes we are seeking to achieve, along with high level details of the activity that will be delivered to meet these objectives. The Plan also highlights important sub regional variations. A summary of the main outcomes and activities we aim to achieve will be included in the final plan taking once the RDA Tasking Framework has been finalised by Government.

In setting out how these objectives are to be delivered, this Corporate Plan is clear that NWDA's role is changing, moving away from direct delivery of actions to strategic engagement and commissioning. This will require an important shift in culture and organisational skills and capacity within NWDA. This Corporate Plan therefore marks the start of a fundamental shift in our relationships with many partners. NWDA will work with sub-regional and local partners to ensure that delivery resources and capacity are located within the most appropriate organisation at the point of delivery. Delivery may continue to be regional where the evidence shows this is most effective (e.g. Business Support).

Change Programme

Change will be achieved through a major programme over 2008/09 covering Agency systems, structures and skills. Specifically over the life of this plan we will:

- Work closely with sub-regions and Local Authorities and emerging **Multi Area Agreements** to strengthen our arrangements for delegation and move towards contracting with relevant organisations on a programme management basis
- Plan investments on the basis of the RES and priorities set out in Economic Development plans agreed by each sub-region which set out how the RES is delivered in those places.
- Work closely with NWRA to develop and support any successor arrangements, which ensure strong co-ordinated local authority involvement in discussing and agreeing priorities within the new Single Regional Strategy and in scrutinising its delivery.
- Develop the new Single Regional Strategy (subject to CLG's detailed consultation) working in close partnership with Local Authorities and Sub Regions, and specifically with NWRA and GONW through the Regional Strategy Team. Subject to legislation RDAs may become the regional planning body during this period.
- Manage the new ERDF programme through formalised partnership working and the PMC.
- Strengthen collaboration with ONE North East and Yorkshire Forward through ensuring the Northern Way takes an evidence based approach focussing on the agreed pan-regional priorities of transport, innovation and private sector investment
- Work in partnership with all RDAs and Government Departments to deliver our lead role responsibility around Skills.
- Support the delivery of Business Support Simplification objectives in the region.

In delivering this plan we will support the principles of sustainable development and equality and diversity and economic opportunity for all which are embedded within the RES. For each objective this plan sets out how these themes will be addressed. The Comprehensive Spending Review also gave RDAs new responsibilities in relation to the Technology Strategy Board, Economic Shocks and Skills Brokerage. This Corporate Plan outlines how NWDA intends to respond to deliver these.

The NWDA is committed to the full use of evaluation evidence to inform its decision making and further improve the effectiveness of future programmes. We have strengthened our approach to evaluation during 2007 and will embed this within the organisation during this Corporate Plan period. We have developed a three year evaluation plan and toolkit covering all projects and programmes. By using evaluation to influence future decision making the Agency will further embed learning and ensure efficient and effective projects and programmes are developed in response to agreed regional priorities.

This Corporate Plan sets out our strategic plans and priorities over the next three years. The Agency will therefore support the implementation of this Corporate Plan by publishing an annual Business Plan³ which will set out our plans for that year in more detail.

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³ The annual Business Plan for each of the three years of the Corporate plan will be the mechanism for setting out the operational details of how the Agency plans to deliver Corporate objectives

2. Review of Current Economic Position

Growth in the Northwest in 2006 was forecast to be 2.2%, close to that in 2005. Forecast growth is expected to be stronger at 2.3% in 2007. The table below illustrates the forecast growth over the Corporate Plan period, GVA growth is forecast to slow to 2.1% in 2008, before recovering to 2.2% in 2009 and to 2.5% in 2010. Current GVA per head growth forecasts, although from a different source (Experian), are substantially lower at 1.7 (2007), 1.9 (2008), 1.6 (2009) and 1.8 (2010).

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Cheshire	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.9
Cumbria	1.7	2	2.2	2.5
Greater Manchester	2.7	2.1	2.2	2.5
Lancashire	1.9	1.9	2	2.3
Merseyside	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.3
Northwest	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.5
UK	2.4	2.1	2.4	3.2

Source(s): Panel Forecasts, October 2007 and Cambridge Econometrics.

Sectoral growth in the region has been mixed with strong growth in construction related sectors, government/public sector, transport and communications. Financial and business services have also grown strongly in 2007. Current forecasts are predicting slower growth, in line with the Governments own projections.

% growth pa	Agriculture	Mining and quarrying	Manufacturing	Electricity, Gas and Water	Construction	Distribution, hotels and catering	Transport and communications	Financial and business services	Government and other services	Total
2007	1.9	-4.3	1	0.6	2.5	2.7	4.1	4.2	1.7	2.3
2008	0.1	1.5	0.9	2.6	1.5	1.8	2.6	3.4	2	2.1
2009	-0.3	-0.9	1.2	2	1.2	2.3	2.8	3	1.9	2.2
2010	0.7	0.3	1.9	1.2	1.2	2.8	3	4	1.8	2.5

Source(s): Panel Forecasts, October 2007 and Cambridge Econometrics.

Employment in the Northwest is forecast to grow by just under 0.5% in 2007 compared to a fall of 1% 2006. Falls in manufacturing and construction employment in 2007 are forecast to be offset by increases in financial & business services, government and other services and in transport and communications. Overall employment growth in the region is likely to slow further in 2008 and 2009 to average

around 0.25% pa, before strengthening to 0.5% in 2010 as general recovery takes hold.

The main risks to the economy include:

- The longer-term impact of the credit crisis nationally and regionally.
- High oil and foodstuffs prices, which have a disproportionate effect on the Northwest due to the size and nature of our manufacturing sector.
- Tighter controls on government spending nationally could have a greater impact on the Northwest due to reliance on public sector employment.
- Ageing population and reduction of the working age population could stem the current growth of the economy in the Northwest.

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3. Policy Context

The Government's review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) reported in July. The review sets out specific policy changes in some areas, whilst in others it signalled further consultation. SNR sets a policy framework for England as a whole, but reflects the existing direction which partners in the Northwest have set and enables us to build on the strong partnership and sub-regional approach which we have put in place.

NWDA will take on a number of new responsibilities during the corporate plan period arising from the CSR and SNR. NWDA will:

- Have responsibility for drawing up a single regional strategy covering economic, transport, housing, planning, social and environmental objectives bringing together the RES, RSS and RHS and will include a delivery plan and resources.
- Be tasked around outcomes (with no output targets) with the focus on a single overarching growth objective for the region – GVA per head.
- Reform its delivery moving more from projects to programmes and delegating decisions to local and sub-regional level taking account of Multi Area Agreements (MAA) where they have been agreed.
- Work within a reformed accountability framework which will see the Regional Assembly cease in its current role and function by 2010 but will involve Local Authority scrutiny and accountability through a Regional Minister.

This plan and the Corporate Objectives we have agreed incorporate NWDA's response to and implementation of the findings of the SNR.

Through SNR there has been a fundamental shift in the way we will undertake our business. We will increasingly shift away from being a delivery organisation to being a strategic organisation. Listening to our major partners, particularly in sub regions and local authorities and, we will ensure that that priorities are set which align to the RES and let them make detailed project decisions. NWDA will retain important delivery functions around business support, where Government has endorsed regional delivery models to ensure maximum efficiency and economies of scale and support Business Support Simplification. SRP Action Plans (and Multi Area Agreements in future) are an important step in this direction and they have been influential in scoping our priorities in this Corporate Plan, which does not make project level commitments. NWDA will focus on strategy and the management of delivery through strategic programmes to ensure outputs and outcomes are achieved in line with the region's single strategy. Achieving this will take time and considerable change, but we are very clear about the journey that we are on. This Corporate Plan marks the start of that fundamental change.

Overarching Growth Objective

Government is proposing to set a minimum growth objective for the region. This has not been finalised, but is likely to be around 1.9% GVA/head per annum real growth

over the period 2002-2012. This is consistent with, and expresses the region's contribution to, the Regional Economic Performance target.

This Corporate Plan sets out the NWDA's contribution to that objective, although it must be recognised that NWDA action alone will not enable it to be achieved. This objective will only be achieved by all partners aligning their activity with the vision and priorities set out in the existing RES and future Single Regional Strategy.

The region has set targets in the RES, which in part are aspirational. This includes an ambition to achieve GVA growth above the England average for 2006-09. Translating this into a GVA /head target this would equate to GVA/head growth target of 2.3%. Government are likely to set a minimum objective of around 1.9%. Therefore the GVA/head growth range which this Corporate Plan is designed to support, is 1.9 - 2.3% per annum.

As outlined above, as part of SNR, Government has changed the RDAs' Tasking Framework. NWDA's performance will be judged based on the progress we make against the objectives set out in this plan. The region as a whole will be monitored against the GVA/head objective and Government will also measure progress in the Northwest on the basis of 5 indicators:

	Outcome Indicator	Description/Measure of Indicator
1.	Productivity	GVA per hour indices
2.	Employment	Employment rates, showing proportion of working age population in work
3.	Skills	Percentage of working age population with basic, intermediate and higher level skills attainments
4.	Innovation	Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D as a proportion of GVA Business; Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D as a proportion of GVA
5.	Enterprise	Number of VAT start-ups per 10,000 working age population

These are consistent with RES targets and indicators and all are priorities for action within the Northwest.

GVA/head is the current nationally accepted measure of economic growth, although Northwest partners are concerned that it does not present a full picture of economic activity and well being within the region. There are also important limitations in its use and calculation. There will also be a range of circumstances in which this GVA/head target should be reviewed and these will be agreed with Government as follows:

- A sudden shock to the regional economy e.g. industrial crises or natural disasters, which have the potential to create substantial economic dislocation and impact severely on business;
- At the time of Government Spending reviews;

- When the regional economic strategy (in due course, the single Regional Strategy) is produced or updated;
- When the Office for National Statistics revises historic data series.

Developing a Single Regional Strategy

GONW, NWDA and NWRA have worked closely with partners to ensure close alignment between the RES, RSS and Regional Housing Strategy, through the Regional Strategy Team. Government has now asked NWDA to lead on the development of a single regional strategy. The Northwest has agreed that it will move as quickly as possible to a Single Regional Strategy and is intending not to update the RES in 2009, but to move straight to a single strategy, in 2010 (subject to the necessary legislation).

The NWDA will work closely with the NWRA and GONW to develop this Single Regional Strategy and work with the NWRA on successor arrangements to the Regional Assembly. Local Authority engagement is particularly important to NWDA and the region given the housing and planning elements of the new single strategy. NWDA is also committed to a full role for the private sector in strategy development and delivery, as the major driver of economic growth and wealth, as well as the 3rd sector.

NWDA, NWRA and Government Office Northwest have agreed the production of a single and common evidence base to develop the single Regional Strategy, and also to inform the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy due to occur in 2008.

Existing research on housing, transport, spatial and land use planning will be integrated into this common evidence base over the next twelve months, reducing duplication of resources and the potential for conflicting evidence bases.

We will put in place major research projects to strengthen our understanding of the linkages between elements of the single strategy and fill gaps in the existing evidence. A summary of the main areas of research underway is included in Annex 1 but includes important research priorities agreed with regional partners on demographics, worklessness, environmental constraints, the link between housing and economic growth, and the link between skills and productivity

This updated evidence base will:

- Stimulate debate and discussion in the development of the next strategy.
- Re-visit the economic factors identified in the RES looking in depth at the evidence available, monitoring progress against outcome indicators and using wider evidence nationally and regionally.
- Identify the need for investment to meet market failures and revisit the challenging questions the region should be seeking to address.
- Identify the comparative advantages and opportunities the Northwest region possesses as a basis for developing the strategy.

Setting NWDA priorities for investment

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) sets out the Regions twenty-year economic strategy, together with specific actions required by all regional partners over the period 2006-9. It sets the framework for the regional, as well as sub-regional and local action and therefore provides the strategic context for all the Agency's activities. The NWDA has an overall leadership responsibility to guide the region in development and delivery of the RES and to ensure that progress against the RES is delivered, monitored and evaluated.

Progress in implementing the RES is carefully monitored and a full report produced on an annual basis, together with a report on progress with Transformational Actions on a 6 monthly basis. The first full annual report showed good progress with most actions, although a need to avoid regional complacency if the rate of progress required for closing vital economic gaps and meeting RES targets is to be achieved.

The RES sets out agreed specific actions under 5 broad areas. RES Transformational Actions for which NWDA has a major responsibility or input are set out below. Our Strategic Objectives have been developed to ensure the delivery of these actions and have been informed by the latest progress monitoring data and our knowledge of current and future economic conditions.

RES Transformational Actions: NWDA Responsibility

Business	1. Transform Business Link* 8. Develop key internationally competitive sectors 9. Develop Media:city 12. Develop higher added value activity through innovation 15 & 16. Exploit the science base and R&D 23. Improve Business Resource Efficiency and Waste support 24. Develop Regional Climate Change Action Plan.
Skills	35. Develop world class management/leadership and corporate social responsibility/environmental management skills.
People and Jobs	Stimulate economic activity in areas remote from growth: 47. East Lancs; 48. Blackpool; 49. Barrow; 50. West Cumbria; 52. Develop employment creation in or near deprived areas, focused on HMR areas, Urban Regeneration Companies, and Halton and Knowsley; Support and sustain conditions for growth in areas with strong economic drivers: 54. Liverpool, Manchester and Preston; 55. Crewe, Chester, Warrington, Lancaster and Carlisle; 56. The Rural economy and the Regional Rural Delivery Framework.
Infrastructure	72. Grow Manchester and Liverpool John Lennon Airports. 80. Deliver designated Strategic Regional Sites.
Quality of Life	101. Improve the region's attack brands and signature projects. 111. Deliver the Regional Equality and Diversity Strategy. 119. Invest in quality public realm, green space and environmental quality focused on the cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Preston; Tourism attack brand and signature project locations and key arrive points; HMR and URC areas; Rural Service Centres.

As a growth-focussed strategy the RES provides a sound, well evidenced, basis for the region's approach to its overarching growth objective. The region has examined the factors, which are most likely to influence GVA per head, and has defined a small number of relevant outcome indicators for each priority area or factor in the RES based on its potential contribution to GVA.

We will monitor these indicators and component parts of GVA as they change in order to understand the overall impact on the economy and, as part of the development of a single regional strategy, we will review these indicators and agree any further targets the region wants to set.

Each objective in the Corporate Plan includes impact measures (based on these RES outcome indicators) which will be used to enable NWDA to ensure that it is contributing appropriately to RES delivery. Using existing data and evaluation evidence, NWDA is also developing a range of outputs that would be most appropriate to capture and monitor in order to assess whether our investments are contributing to the delivery of these outcomes. In line with delegation of decision making to the most appropriate level, NWDA may contract with partners for the delivery of a range of outcomes or outputs (related to a programme or programmes of activity, rather than individual projects). The outputs/ outcomes we set for our programmes will form part of NWDA's contracting framework with delivery partners, often on a geographic basis and potentially linked to an MAA.

This will enable NWDA to link its investment to outputs from specific delivery vehicles and local and sub-regional organisations, through outcomes and ultimately to GVA/head (which has a 2-3 year time lag). This is particularly important where outcome data is not available at the sub-regional or local level. This will enable NWDA to be confident that achievement of outputs by partners will contribute to achievement of the GVA/head target and to evaluate programmes on this basis.

4. Review of Progress against Corporate Plan 2005 –2008

In our 2005/06 to 2007/08 Corporate Plan, we set out our Corporate Priorities and how these would support the continued delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy. That Corporate Plan was refreshed once the 2006 RES was produced, which all partners agreed was the most focused and prioritised RES to date. In particular we have focussed on those transformational actions which the region agreed would have maximum impact on sustainable economic growth. A more comprehensive overview of progress and achievements is detailed within the Agency's Annual Reports and Accounts covering the Corporate Plan period. These reports are freely available and are not repeated here.

Below is a selection of key achievements and examples of progress on delivery of the last Corporate Plan. The Agency has performed well, building on the improvements to our systems and approach we have been implementing since 2003. We are currently projecting to meet our output targets agreed with central Government in the 2005 to 2008 Corporate Plan as set out in table below.

In addition, the Agency was one of the first RDAs to undergo the IPA process and was assessed as performing strongly, the highest grade possible.

Business Development	mediacity:uk - project at Salford Quays, including the BBC's decision to move 1,500 jobs to the site; Successful launch of Business Link Northwest to support the national business simplification agenda for Business Link with minimum interruption to businesses; Opening of the National Bio-manufacturing Centre at Speke , flagship Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and the launch of the Cockcroft Institute. The Agency's investment in the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine's new Centre for Tropical and Infectious Diseases (which received its 'topping out' ceremony from Lord Sainsbury) levered in a further £25 Million grant from the "Gates' Foundation" and has been awarded status of Biomedical Centre in Infectious Disease by the Department of Health; Launch of Responsibility Northwest In March 2006 - A £3m programme of awareness raising, benchmarking and mentoring for Northwest Businesses on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
Skills & Employment (People and Jobs)	The Agency has been actively supporting the new University of Cumbria the Nuclear Academy and a new University Centre for Burnley ; Project Unity has seen the creation of a major University to rival the best in the country; Worklessness projects delivered as part of the Northern Way programme have supported 2,159 individuals resulting in taking 212 of them being taken off long term incapacity benefits and back into work and 133 into training; the leadership programme has engaged with over 1,000 through the Northern Leadership Academy programme run by Lancaster University; supported three City Employment Strategies now up and running in Liverpool, Manchester and Blackburn.
Infrastructure	Completion of One Central Park in the New East Manchester URC area; Rochdale Kingsway Phase1; Liverpool cruise liner facility; Liverpool Science Park;

Quality of Life/Image	Aligning the ERDF, ESF and Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) programmes in the region with the RES; Implementing the Natural Economy Northwest programme to develop the economic benefit of the region's natural environment. Through Agency stewardship, the region was the first to launch its Climate Change Action Plan , designed to reduce our carbon emissions. The Action Plan will deliver real progress towards a low carbon economy for the region. Success in attracting new major events to the region, such as Liverpool, Capital of Culture, FINA World Swimming Championships, The Turner Prize and improvements in the image of the region as a place to live, work and invest.
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Table 2: Total Outputs aggregated 2005/06 to 2007/08

Output Indicator*	3 Year Achieved Aggregated Total*	3 Year Target Aggregated Min Total
1. Jobs Created and Safeguarded	60,846	37,600
2. Number of people assisted to get a job	15,542	3,675
3. Businesses Created	8,494	5,160
4. Businesses Assisted	71,797	41,920
4a) New Collaborations with the Knowledge Base	4,546	1,710
5. Investment Levered (£m)	1,087	910
5?. % of Private Investment Levered	60%	38%
5f?. Brownfield Remediated (Ha)	933	793
6. Skills Development?	85,883	33,600
6a) Number of adults achieving at least NVQ 2	2,456	2,175
6b) Number of adults gaining basic skills	6,027	2,215

* 2007/08 achieved total is based on forecast outturn figures.

5. Corporate Objectives, Key Priorities and Themes

Government is tasking the Agency with identifying our contribution to the single overarching growth objective. This will be subject to further consideration by Government, but is likely to be between 1.9% and 2.3% per annum over the period 2008-2012. This section sets out corporate objectives designed to support the achievement of a regional growth objective of this nature based on the priorities set out in the RES.

We have set out the detail behind our objectives, including links to the RES and articulated the rationale for investment, the outcomes we are seeking to achieve, the broad areas of activity we believe it is right to pursue to achieve those outcomes and the amount of investment we intend to make. This is summarised in the table below. These objectives take an integrated approach to social inclusion, equality and diversity, under represented groups and the needs of rural areas in the region through a mainstreamed approach to their delivery.

With partners we have undertaken a major study to identify the market failures associated with each RES action. This will guide our investment priorities, along with research about the regional economy, current performance information, and strong monitoring and impact evaluation.

Sub Regional Priorities

The Northwest has developed economic development plans for each sub region, produced by a business led Sub Regional Partnership working closely with partners. These plans set out how the RES will be delivered in each sub region and identify further sub regional priorities.

As outlined earlier, increasingly the role of NWDA is one of strategy and delivery management, ensuring that priorities are agreed at a local level which are consistent with the RES. Within these agreed priorities, we will let others get on with the detail of project decisions and management, via delegation. Sub Regional Action Plans have therefore been very influential in scoping this Corporate Plan and setting our investment priorities and NWDA's own policies. In line with NWDA's changed role, this Corporate Plan does not make individual project decisions. Each objective also includes likely spatial implications or investments.

The detail of programme and project investment levels will alter as individual investments are developed and approved, often within sub regions. This will be based on specific outcomes the region is trying to achieve in each place to support the RES vision and overall regional growth objective. This will be supported by developments such as Multi Area agreements.

NWDA's 3 year investment plan (which will underpin implementation of this plan) will be finalised following this consultation process. The final Corporate Plan will therefore include further detail of how NWDA's investment will impact in each sub-region.

Summary of NWDA Objectives

The table below summarises NWDA objectives and proposed investment levels over the Corporate Plan period. The following sections then give the detail behind each objective.

Objective	Main RES Actions	Proposed Investment (2008-11) £m
<u>COMPETITIVE BUSINESS</u>		
1. Growth Sectors: Support the development of key internationally competitive sectors, including appropriate exploitation of the science base	8-11, 15, 16, 101, 103-105	165.7
2. Enterprise Support: Improve the formation, survival and growth rates of enterprises, including via availability of business finance	1-6, 53	174.6
3. Innovation: Develop higher added value activity through innovation and knowledge transfer	12-14, 20-22	87.7
4. Internationalisation: Realise opportunities from globalisation, including international trade, inward investment and supply chain opportunities	17-19	18.3
<u>COMPETITIVE PEOPLE</u>		
5. Leadership and Management: Develop leadership and management skills (including coaching and mentoring) in the current workforce	35	27.7
6. Higher Level Skills Development: Develop intermediate and higher level skills in the current workforce, including appropriate sector skills	27, 31	65.8
7. Size of the Workforce: Grow the size of the workforce through support for the work of the City Employment Strategies and tackling barriers to work	41-46, 62, 108, 109, 111	27.8
<u>COMPETITIVE PLACES</u>		
8. Employment Sites and Premises: Support the development of key employment sites and premises in the region	80-83	88.8
9. Conditions for Private Sector Investment: Improve the physical conditions for increased private sector investment in the key places in the region, including key infrastructure and public realm	47-52, 54-56, 84, 116, 119	331.6
10. Climate Change and Sustainable Consumption/Production: Ensure the implementation of the regional Climate Change Action Plan (including energy security) and the development of resource efficiency and sustainable procurement in companies	23-25, 91	23.8
11. Marketing the Region: Improve the image of the region to businesses and visitors by countering outdated negative perceptions	95, 98, 99	27.5

DETAILED CORPORATE OBJECTIVES, RATIONALE, OUTCOMES & ACTIVITIES

1. GROWTH SECTORS

Investment: £165.7 million

Objective: Generate net additional economic wealth through the growth and development of our internationally competitive sectors and those sectors which contribute to widespread employment in our sub-regions.

RES Link: This objective delivers on our RES priority actions to support the development of higher added-value activity in regional sectors and supports 8-11, 15, 16, 101, 103-105.

Rationale

Market failures in growth sectors combine to limit the potential contribution these sectors make to the regional economy. These include imperfect information, institutional and coordination failures, limiting the rate of growth in the sectors for example, limiting the development of clusters of economic activities or sites resulting in a loss of potential agglomeration benefits. Our investments will aim to minimise the impact of these failures and stimulate future growth in these sectors.

Outcomes

Our investment programmes are intended to help the region substantially increase the economic wealth generated by growth sectors. They will be targeted investments which will enable substantial growth in those sectors and deliver widespread benefits across the Northwest, such as our visitor economy, maritime, distribution and logistics, retail, construction, and health and care services. Increased economic wealth will be delivered by ensuring that priority sectors account for an increased proportion of the GVA of the total regional economy by;

- Increasing the number of firms working in priority sectors.
- Enabling firms to increase productivity and move up the value chain in their industries.
- Facilitating and supporting activities which will raise and increase the rate of employment within these sectors.
- Increasing the market share of these sectors

The Agency will also ensure the region's growth sectors are supported to effectively deal with unanticipated regional economic shocks.

Activity

Growth sector activities will focus on supporting sectorally significant infrastructure programmes including:

- Supply chain projects to retain and enhance value within the region through innovative projects both up and downstream through improving performance and quality, stimulating competition, and overcoming barriers.
- Work with existing investors in the region to grow, enhance, and increase both GVA and number of jobs.
- Reinforcement and encouragement of cluster collaboration through networking, awareness raising and specialist support and improve access to information.

- Delivering priority sector projects including Mediacity:uk; the Food Resource Centre; the Regional Aerospace Park; and a Virtual Engineering Centre; invest in Attack brands and deliver Signature Projects to transform the region's appeal to visitors'
- Supporting our delivery partners the five sub-regional Tourism Boards and implementing the Regional Tourism Strategy.
- Improving a place through our public realm and the built and natural environment to support further private sector investment.

Spatial Implications

The growth sector objective reflects sub-regional strategies and action plans. Sub-regional partners have identified specific spatial opportunities and areas for action in their Sub Regional Action Plans (SRAPs) and the Agency will continue to work closely with delivery organisations in each sub region. Growth sectors and the visitor economy have strong spatial implications because of supply chains and knowledge transfer which depends on close physical proximity. For example, the Biomedical cluster centres on the triangle of Liverpool, Manchester, and Daresbury with virtually all employment in this location. Our visitor economy activities will directly reflect priorities of the 5 sub-regional Tourist Boards. Key attraction development and activities are focused on enabling our regional Attack brands to improve their performance and market penetration.

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2. ENTERPRISE SUPPORT**Investment: £174.6 million****Objective:**

Improve the formation, survival and growth rates of enterprise: focused on developing the region's enterprise culture; assisting business start up, growth and competitiveness; delivery of the Business Link advice service; and improving the availability and ease of access to business finance.

RES Actions:

This objective delivers on our RES priority actions to improve the rate of business start up, growth and competitiveness in the Region. It supports RES actions 1-6 and 53.

Rationale

The rationale for our programmes in support of this objective has three elements: Information failures, institutional coordination failures and barriers to entry into the market which includes addressing the finance market gap that exists for SME's particularly start ups as detailed below;

- Imperfect information lead to lack of awareness, by existing and potential businesses, of the available business support and advice which in turn impacts on the survival or growth rates of established businesses while also hindering the rate of start-ups for new businesses.
- Coordination failures result from the existence of a plethora of often conflicting, confusing or competing (duplicated) business support provision which either crowds out or confuses both potential and existing businesses.
- Availability and access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises is a barrier to the formation and growth of businesses. Public support will provide precision intervention to address specific areas of market failure addressing the 3 key components in the financial equation – demand, supply and intermediation services. Our programmes will aim to catalyse and incentivise the availability of the right type of financing funds, especially to those types of businesses who do not traditionally access external finance, without crowding out private sector provision.
- The Northwest is a diverse region, some groups or communities are still underrepresented within our enterprises especially SMEs and have also been found to face the highest level of failure of outcomes as they do not actively participate and share in the benefits of economic growth. Combined with a historical legacy of lack of enterprise awareness, aspiration, skills and capabilities this locks communities into a cycle, which does not foster enterprise leading to poverty of opportunity for individuals resulting in disadvantaged communities.

Outcomes

Our investment will be geared towards increasing the level of enterprise and the number of businesses in the Northwest by;

- Promoting positive enterprising behaviours and culture in the region, leading over time to higher levels of productivity, business density and economic activity.
- Assisting businesses to access information and support designed for enabling enterprise skills development in young people and adults, availability of up-to-date and relevant business support information to enable business start up and grow. Our outcomes will be measured annually through our evaluation programmes.

- Supporting the creation and growth of new businesses, aiming for 5100 new business starts, a further 2600 assists leading to 11000 net jobs created,
- Improve the business survival rate for assisted start-ups to 80% at 36 months through Business Link information, diagnostic and brokerage service.
- The Finance for Business programme will aim to improve the availability and access to finance for SMEs - one of the biggest barriers to formation, survival and growth of businesses.

In addition the Agency through this objective will ensure the region effectively deal with unanticipated regional economic shocks and deliver an effective skills brokerage service.

The impact of these programmes will be reflected in an increase in the business density per head of population; an increased number of self-employed and VAT-registered business start-ups; increased productivity levels and strong firm survival rates; and an improving the proportion of new jobs generated in our Regional Economic Strategy priority sectors.

The Business Link will provide Information, Diagnostic and Brokerage services, available to all businesses and individuals with very clear outputs contracted for as set out below.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Customer Satisfaction	91%	91%	91%
Total Users	96,000	103,300	104,600
Business Users	85,400	89,700	96,000
Intensive Assistance	5,500	7,500	9,600
GVA Increase	£305m	£416m	£528m

Resulting Activity

Our activity will be focused on;

- Programmes and projects to develop an enterprise culture through skills and leadership and management programmes through the NW Enterprise Forum.
- Provision of timely and relevant advice and support to individuals and businesses, including social enterprises, to facilitate successful business start up and growth through projects like the Regional Start Up & Survivability and High Growth Business Support.
- Effective management of the Business Link service including the 2012 CompeteFor service, which is an electronic brokerage system designed to support SMEs exploit Olympic Games related procurement opportunities.

Spatial Implications

Business Link is a universal region-wide programme incorporating targeted projects designed to boost the participation rates of currently underrepresented groups e.g. our Regional Start Up and Survivability projects. The impact and coverage of Business Link will be different between sub regions depending on business need and socio-economic structure. The programme has been designed to take these into account and our impact evaluation will reflect these intra-regional differences in impact resulting from this intervention.

3. COMPETITIVE BUSINESS & INNOVATION**Investment: £87.7 million****Objective**

Grow economic wealth through major improvements in business innovation and competitiveness, delivered through substantial programmes in science places, enabling knowledge transfer, commercialisation of IP, and ICT adoption.

RES Link

This objective delivers on our RES priority actions to improve business competitiveness through innovation. It supports RES actions 12 to 14 and 20-22.

Rationale

Our innovation investments are designed to address four aspects of market failure; imperfect information, spillovers, barriers to entry and historic lock-in/path dependency. These market failures have meant that as a region we suffer from relatively low innovation and ICT adoption rates which affect our competitiveness.

- Imperfect information leads to low levels businesses awareness of the potential benefits of innovation and ICT adoption.
- Businesses can be reluctant to invest if they believe they run the risk of 'spill over' effects, losing the benefit of their investment to competitors too soon. Our public sector investment rationale is to achieve successful clusters of innovative, technological businesses and gain the positive spillover benefits of doing this.
- Innovation and ICT are resource intensive, use up resources in the present while the benefits accrue in the longer term and are not assured. The levels of funding required by both are sometimes cited as a barrier to entry and prevent individual businesses adopting new technology and developing innovative products or services. Our intervention should be aimed at mitigating these barriers to entry and assist businesses innovate quicker.
- Historically the Northwest has not had as widespread an SME base as other regions, and existing firms can be locked into a historic path of low capital investment. Though private sector R&D is relatively high it is concentrated in a few major players, and creating a step change in the innovation and technology capacity of our SME business base is an important rationale for our investments.

Public sector spending on research and science is an important feed into our ambitions for a private-sector led knowledge economy. Currently we suffer from a historic path dependency of a relatively low level of public sector research and science investment, and we wish to reposition our research centres, higher education institutions and science parks to be centres of excellence to progressively attract and capture an increasing share of public sector research activity.

Outcomes

By 2011, we will aim to:

- Increase number of innovation active firms in the region from 59% to 75%.
- Increase the level of public sector R&D investment in the region from 3% of the UK total to 6%.
- Increase level of HEI R&D in the region from 14% to 20% of the UK total.

- Increase private sector R&D spend in the region from £1.9bn to £2.3bn per annum.
- Increase number of business/University interactions by 2000 per annum, enabling businesses to obtain consultancy services, support, or training.
- Helping businesses adopt and exploit advanced ICT
- Helping improve the volume, quality, reliability and accessibility of ICT advisors and suppliers
- Helping fill ICT skills gaps in the labour market, both user and professional skills
- Ensuring availability of globally competitive broadband infrastructure and services

Resulting Activity

Activity will encourage innovation through:

- Working with over 400 companies in the region to embed innovation in their company structure, and working with over 1000 companies in the region to develop action plans to improve innovation rates, through a major project called Knowledge to innovate and funding Innovation Advisors.
- Ongoing support to establish Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus as a thriving, vibrant location for public sector science and for private sector research
- Investing in collaborative research programmes between HEI and industry which will offer the region a competitive advantage, specifically investing in science strategy implementation projects in Materials, Chemistry, Nuclear, Biohealth, and Aerospace
- Ensuring knowledge transfer investment is concentrated into matching HEIF funding which extends the ability of Northwest universities to work with businesses.
- Working with the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) to take forward transformational innovation projects

Spatial Implications

Merseyside and Cheshire will benefit from the creation of Liverpool Science Park and Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus. The impact will be to create two new major sites for inward investment and regional technology company growth. The majority of the investment in Manchester will go to Project Unity creating a world-class University of Manchester. Lancashire and south Cumbria will benefit from development of Lancaster Science Park. *ICT support will be focused on places currently experiencing low rates of broadband coverage, ICT adoption and exploitation.*

4. INTERNATIONALISATION**Investment: £18.3 million****Objective**

Maximising opportunities from globalisation and emerging markets, raising companies' awareness of global opportunities and risks to enable them to compete internationally and realising opportunities for the region from international trade and inward investment.

RES Link

This objective delivers on our RES priority action to improve the region's international competitiveness by exploiting the Northwest's comparative advantage to increase trade and attract foreign direct investment. It supports RES actions 17 to 19.

Our Internationalisation Strategy and Action Plan (ISAP) sets out an integrated plan that aims to enhance our international position and ensure that we maximise the opportunities that globalisation offers the region whilst mitigating the risks and downsides that are an inevitable part of the process of change.

Rationale

Globalisation and international trade can contribute significantly to the regional economy. Market failures and physical barriers exist that limit the number of, and extent to which, UK businesses engage in international trade and overseas firms invest in the region. These include imperfect information, language and cultural barriers, and costs and physical barriers resulting from international regulatory regimes. In order to maximise opportunities emerging from the economies of high growth markets including China, and India we need a coordinated approach to ensure the region effectively and efficiently exploits the comparative advantages it has in the global market.

Working closely with UK Trade and Investment our programme will be geared towards providing up-to-date information and advice to new and existing export businesses. We will also work to overcome the social-network barriers in terms of language and cultural differences, as well as helping companies gain access to knowledge networks. In addition we will target new overseas investors and work with existing investors to embed them in the region. These activities will be underpinned by a programme to promote the region's key assets in target markets.

Outcomes

Increasing the number of firms that export and helping existing investors enter new markets has a direct productivity and competitiveness impact. Foreign direct investment has also been proven to drive up regional productivity and close the GVA gap (overseas firms on average pay more per worker than average, 29%, and are 34% more productive per worker). Inward investment adds to the stock of both the knowledge economy and priority sectors in the Northwest.

Our outcomes include:

- Increasing the number of inward investment projects to 150 per annum by 2009/10 with research and development projects targeted to rise from 7% to 17% of the total number of projects by 2009/10.

- Ensuring inward investment projects are positioned high in their industry's value chain, with at least 25% of projects paying an average salary of over £30K.
- Raising our companies' awareness of global opportunities to assist them to compete internationally, with a target of enabling an additional £50m per annum in export sales by 2009/10.

Resulting Activity

We will be undertaking the following types of activity:

- Supporting the work of UK Trade and Investment by providing an integrated package of support to help companies trade internationally including additional sector focused trade advisors, meet the buyer events, sector missions and events to identify opportunities in target markets.
- Undertake inward investment lead generation activities in target markets identified in the Internationalisation Strategy
- Work with sub-regional inward investment agencies to implement investment projects and undertake an investor development programme with existing overseas investors
- Implementing the international business marketing plan for the Northwest

Spatial Implications

The Internationalisation Strategy and Action Plan (ISAP) has a close fit with the sub-regional strategies and action plans; all of which identify global opportunities and threats. The Agency will continue to work closely with inward investment organisations in each sub region.

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5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**Investment: £27.7 million****Objective**

Develop leadership and management skills (including coaching and mentoring) within the current workforce

RES Link

This objective delivers our responsibilities under the RES Objective to develop leadership, management and enterprise skills. In particular it will deliver against Transformational RES Action 35 to develop world-class leadership and management skills.

Rationale

Investment in Leadership and Management is important for two reasons. Firstly leaders and managers will drive the future direction and business development of their business and good leaders/managers will develop the kind of innovation and enterprise capabilities that more Northwest businesses need to develop. Secondly a high quality of leadership and management will develop a culture of investing in workforce development and thereby release the potential of the whole workforce, a key theme within the RES.

Information and co-ordination failures leading to supply and demand deficiencies mean businesses are not unlocking the true potential of their workforce, limiting productivity. In the Northwest, compared to the national average, there are fewer managers, greater shortages for management occupations and identification of significant skills gaps for managers. This forms the basis of our rationale for intervention. On the demand side, lack of awareness (information) regarding the business benefits of leadership and management development lead to low take up. Our role should be to better inform businesses of how crucial good leadership and management is in unlocking the full potential of the workforce and in driving forward the business

On the supply side, leadership and management development needs of business are not being met by the current provision (co-ordination). Our role should be to ensure the highest quality of provision (programmes and support) which meets the needs of businesses and stimulates thinking, business development and innovative behaviours.

The Northwest, has historically, tended to have low levels of managed businesses, partly due to the historic dominance of large manufacturing companies. It was therefore vulnerable to a lack of both demand and supply of good leadership and management provision.

Outcomes

Currently the NWDA Board, together with major regional partners, is carrying out a review to identify priority actions to deliver workforce development and maximise the potential of the future workforce. An element of this is focussed on leadership and management and the outcomes below will be refined in the light of this work.

The outcomes we are seeking to achieve through this objective are:

- Drive up business productivity by £200m through increasing the level of leadership and management skills.
- Increase understanding within businesses of the importance and benefits of investment into leadership and management training, as evidenced by increased take up of leadership and management provision
- Increase the proportion of those in employment in the Northwest who are in senior management roles, and to increase the proportion of those senior managers who hold an appropriate higher-level qualification.
- Reduce the number of employers reporting managerial skills gaps and experiencing senior recruitment constraints.

Resulting Activity

To achieve this objective we will be undertaking the following types of activity:

- Implementing the Northwest Leadership and Management Framework for Action which includes 3 main areas for action; Generating Demand; Improving Supply; and measuring Impact
- Rolling out a major programme based on the successful LEAD model.

Spatial Implications

The issues of Leadership and Management affect the whole region. However as these programmes and support are developed, there will be close contact with each of the sub regions and programmes targeted as appropriate to meet specific sub regional needs and the needs of key sectors.

6. HIGHER LEVEL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT Investment: £65.8 million

Objective

Develop intermediate and higher-level skills in the current workforce, including appropriate sector skills. Our work here is complementary to the work of a wide range of other agencies.

RES Link:

This objective, in partnership with others, delivers on our responsibilities on RES actions to meet the needs of sectors and growth opportunities, invest in workforce development and to develop education infrastructure and the skills of the future workforce. In particular it delivers on Transformational RES Actions 27 (skills for priority sectors) and 28 (skills to maximise key growth opportunities) and well as Transformational RES Action 31 (develop the skills of the current workforce) and Transformational RES Action 38 (develop the role of HE in Cumbria and East Lancs)

Rationale

Higher levels skills are recognised as vital to the future competitiveness of the region's economy and are an area where the Northwest underperforms other parts of the country (the Northwest is ranked 5th out of all English regions and is 2.3% behind the England average). Similarly within the Northwest there are significant differences in the performance of particular areas and sub-regions. Achieving these higher levels skills must be done by investing in the current workforce and well as the future workforce – it will deliver too little too late if all investment is focused in the future workforce. This is particularly true for our key growth sectors where there is a lack of ability to recruit especially in science and engineering.

Market failures that exist in the provision of higher level skills include equity failures (the need to invest in provision to support the wider regeneration of key places in the region, given current poor performance). Other market failures include externalities (where development paid for by one company may benefit another as staff move) information failures (employers do not recognise the business benefit of investment in higher level skills) and the need to stimulate employer demand in line with the Leitch agenda.

One of our roles should be to demonstrate to businesses the productivity benefits from investment in higher level skills. Another role should be to ensure access to higher level skills provision. This is particularly the case in Cumbria and East Lancashire where the lack of access to higher level skills development is detrimental to the regeneration of the economy. The delivery of this objective will support other objectives, most notably the Growth Sectors objective.

Outcomes

Our objective is the development of intermediate and higher level skills in the current workforce as a key driver of productivity and economic growth and we will measure the increase in GVA/worker wherever possible via new provision. Specifically we intend to meet the skills needs of employers in priority sectors, and to increase the number of HE students in Cumbria and East Lancashire.

Specifically, our outcomes over 2008-2011 are, in partnership with other agencies, to:

- Increase the proportion of the working age population qualified to level 3 and above from 43%
- Reduce the percentage of employers reporting skills gaps from 16%
- Increasing the percentage of employers investing in training from 64% to
- Increase the number of FTE HE students in Cumbria and East Lancashire
- Increasing the number of employers achieving Investors in People
- Reduce the number of employers reporting higher level skills gaps in RES priority sectors
- Improve our ranking with the English regions for higher level skills

These outcomes will be further refined to reflect the recommendation of the Leitch Implementation Group recommendations and targets.

Resulting Activity

We will achieve this by targeted interventions focusing on developing skills in key places and sectors responding to the needs and demands of the sectors. The activities will focus on capacity building or development of flexible demand led support and provision, which cannot be funded by other means, and which helps stimulate innovative, enterprising behaviours. In particular we will be looking at bringing Level 3 and 4 provision into the workplace. As noted above the Board has set up a Task and Finish Group to consider how best to release the potential of the whole workforce and has identified key enterprise capabilities which need to be developed within supported activity. Specific actions to achieve our objectives include:

- Support for the University of Cumbria and HE in Burnley
- Supporting the Higher Level Skills Pathfinder linking Train2Gain activity with higher education and widening the coverage of sectors
- Engaging further education and work-based learning providers to meet employer needs and supporting capacity building, responding to the demand led agenda
- Supporting projects and programmes in RES priority sectors

Spatial Implications

There will be key impacts in Cumbria and East Lancashire where new HE provision will be developed. The impact will vary across sub regions, as many projects and programmes will be linked to the location of RES priority sectors. New projects and programmes will be developed in close consultation and contact with each of the sub regions and will be targeted as appropriate to meet specific sub regional needs and the needs of key sectors.

7. SIZE OF THE WORKFORCE**Investment: £27.8 million****Objective**

Through this objective the Agency aims to contribute to the growth in the size of the workforce including support for the work of the City Employment Strategies and tackling barriers to work.

RES Link

This objective delivers on our RES priority actions to grow the size the regions workforce. It supports RES actions 41 to 46, 62, supports RES action 108, 109 and 111.

Rationale

Economic and social imperatives dictate that the region has a strategy for ensuring that we maximise the proportion of the working population who are in active employment. Employment contributes significantly to the regional GVA and worklessness constrains the region's economy in a direct way by imposing significant costs in terms of the loss of potential output, wealth creation or other social costs like incidence of crime, ill health and poverty of opportunity leading to disadvantaged communities. Market failures in this area combine in complex ways that hinder or limit participation rates in employment within the region. These include information asymmetry, institutional co-ordination failures, skills gaps leading to lack of opportunities and poor outcomes for particular groups of individuals, localities or communities. Addressing these in a coherent and efficient manner with our partners has the potential to improve the impact of regions efforts to achieve this objective.

Our aim and role should be to provide strategic leadership and support schemes, which will ensure that the active inclusion and participation in economic opportunities are available to all the diverse communities of the region.

Outcomes

A large proportion of investment in this area will be focused to achieve the outcomes outlined in the three City Employment Strategies benefiting local people. We will work in partnership to ensure equality and diversity is taken seriously and the economic benefit of tackling these issues is recognised. Appropriate outcomes will be captured within this section in the coming months which will include;

- Increase percentage number of people into work.
- Increase economic activity rates.
- Reduce the number of people claiming Incapacity Benefit and support them back into work. Employment rates in key places (City Employment Strategies) and other locations as appropriate.
- Employment rates for disabled, women, older people and under-represented and marginalised groups.
- Increase the skills of those recently employed
- Influencing key decision makers and stakeholders
- Effective collaborative partnerships that can affect the direction of funding for activities creating sustainable growth and competitiveness for BME/Women owned business leading to wealth, jobs and prosperity
- Support and increase the employability of ex-offenders.

Resulting Activity

Locally targeted activities in areas of most need. Within Greater Manchester and Liverpool focus will be around the City Strategy Pathways. All projects support people furthest from the labour market who are not supported by the mainstream such as Job Centre Plus. Significant projects include:

- Growing the size and capability of the work force in Manchester
- Liverpool Employability Pilot
- People & Jobs Warrington & Cheshire
- Regional Worklessness Cumbria and Lancashire

There will be a range of activities also featuring secretariat support for the ED Forum and information alerts, however the aim is to implement the Regional and Equality Diversity Strategy.

Spatial Implications

The primary focus of this activity will be investing through the City Employment Strategies of Manchester, Liverpool and Blackburn. However, there will be other targeted investment in line with Regional Economic Strategy priority areas.

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8. EMPLOYMENT SITES AND PREMISES**Investment: £ 88.8 million****Objective**

Support the development of key employment sites and premises in the region

RES Link

This objective delivers on our RES priority actions to deliver high quality employment sites and premises and secure new uses for brownfield land. This covers RES Actions 80-83, including the Transformational RES Action to deliver the designated Strategic Regional Sites and RES Action 82 to deliver a portfolio of sub-regionally important employment sites.

Rationale

Market failures exist because key sites are considered not financially viable or attractive for investment by the private sector. In some locations high costs of development (due to previous uses or contamination) and low market values mean that it is not financially viable for the market to develop sites. In other locations it is important we intervene to ensure that sites of sufficient scale/strategic importance are assembled to present an attractive offer to potential private sector developers and are secured for end uses that complement strategic aspirations. Our role should be to ensure sites are developed to encourage the appropriate level and type of investment required for sustainable economic growth. It is important to highlight that our intervention here is integral to the achievement of other RES objectives including for example the development of sites to support the growth of our internationally competitive sectors.

Outcomes

We are seeking to achieve two main outcomes from investing in this objective and these will be quantified as part of the Strategic Sites review currently underway. These will include;

- ensuring we continue to bring forward land for development and future employment use in particular Grade A office accommodation
- To deliver sites to support increased employment in the region and new jobs leading to an increase in GVA and an increase in rental levels in the areas supported

The aim of our investment will also be to attract new employment and wealth generating businesses onto strategic sites from outside the region and to ensure sustainable development of sites.

Resulting Activity

Activity will include master planning, land assembly, land remediation, provision of new infrastructure and gap funding of private sector development. It will result in the removal of barriers for investment and increased private sector investment in key locations, as well as supporting the development of regionally important sectors. The Agency is reviewing strategic and sub-regional sites in support of the above objectives and outcomes, the new ERDF Investment Framework, Sub-Regional Action Plans and sustainable development principles. An implementation plan will establish specific objectives for agreed priority sites, the nature of intervention required and proposed delivery mechanisms. Major projects include:

- Kingsway Rochdale
- Wigan Bickershaw Colliery;
- St Helens United Glass site;
- Middlewich Mid-Point;
- West Lakes Science Park
- Crewe Basford
- Wirral International Business Park

Spatial Implications

We will focus investment on RES designated strategic regional sites which are in major locations across the region. We will also work with all Sub-Regional Partnerships to identify and invest in sub-regionally important employment sites, as appropriate.

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9. CONDITIONS FOR PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT

Investment: £331.6 million

Objective

Improve the physical conditions for increased private sector investment in the key places in the region.

RES Link

This objective delivers on our RES priority actions to support and sustain conditions for growth in areas with strong economic drivers (Transformational RES Actions 54-56), as well as stimulate economic activity in areas remote from growth (Transformational RES Actions 47-50). It also supports the development of employment in or near deprived areas (Transformational RES Action 52) and the development of high quality public realm, green space and environmental quality (Transformational RES Action 119) as well as the development of brownfield land (RES Action 84) and Regional Parks (RES Action 116)

Rationale

The rationale for Agency intervention is based on evidence of market failure which manifests itself in a number of ways across the region. This includes the failure to utilise and develop sites for employment uses and the failure to reuse brownfield land which has become derelict or degraded. The causes include low market values, high costs of development, lack and basic amenity and infrastructure and poor quality of surround environment including public realm which acts as a further deterrent to investment.

Outcomes

The outcomes we are seeking to relate to URC objectives and these will be further refined and quantified once URC business plans have been analysed. These will include;

- Support the achievement of URC objectives of in Liverpool through the new Regeneration Company, New East Manchester, Central Salford and Blackpool,
- In West Cumbria, In other growth towns/cities identified in the RES, much of the work is still at a master-planning stage and specific outcomes will be identified before investments are made, but in general terms we will be seeking to increase the availability of new high quality floorspace and improve public realm and quality of place, with subsequent rises in commercial property rentals/values.
- In Rural areas our investment will support activity in and around key centres to increase their contribution to GVA. This will focus on improving both the availability of high quality managed workspace and employment land and the role that the public realm plays in investment in rural areas.
- Increase the amount of regional land available for active use via investment in reclaiming brownfield land and developing regional parks.

Resulting Activity

Activity may include master-planning, land assembly and remediation, developer procurement and gap-funding to provide new high quality floor space, provision of new infrastructure and strategic green space. Activity will also include removing barriers to development of sites for new employment uses and creating employment opportunities, a quality of place, new visitor destinations and vibrant sustainable communities. Major projects include:

- Ancoats, Manchester
- Projects to capitalise upon the development of Media City, Salford.
- Liverpool Knowledge Community Quarter
- Liverpool New Anfield
- Blackpool Conference/Leisure Quarter
- Barrow Ramsden Business Park and Marina Village
- Preston Commercial Business District and Riverworks
- Carlisle Rickergate and Riverside
- Public realm and improvement in the quality of the offer in Lancaster, Crewe and Chester
- NEWLANDS, REVIVE, REMADE and Cumbria SEU land reclamation schemes
- Regional Park development

Spatial Implications

Activity will be spatially focused on the City Region Centres (Manchester, Liverpool and Preston) as well as in the Growth Towns/Cities and Areas Remote from Growth, identified in the RES. URC Business Plans, Vision Board plans and Sub-Regional Action Plans will drive much of this activity.

10. CLIMATE CHANGE & SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION/ PRODUCTION

Investment: £23.8 million

Objective

Implementation of the regional Climate Change Action Plan (including energy security); the adoption of resource-efficient technologies and practices in companies and the development of facilitative policies and infrastructure

RES Link

This objective delivers on our RES priority actions to grow the economy in a sustainable manner. It supports RES actions 23-35 and 91.

Rationale

The UK's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) promotes a vision of "one planet economics". The inefficient use of resources is a burden on the region's economy. In addition, the 2006 Stern review identified climate change as "the greatest market failure ever known". The review concluded that the economic benefits of strong and early action to tackle climate change far outweigh the costs.

The market failures preventing businesses from taking action to increase their energy efficiency and reduce waste production include: lack of awareness/information; the low cost of carbon; lack of infrastructure; leadership and co-ordination failures. These form the basis of our rationale for intervention.

Imperfect information means businesses are ill prepared to take action because they do not know what to do first or where to go for advice. Our role should be to raise awareness and consumer demand, simplify access to support and better inform businesses of measures they can take, based on best available data. There is also a perception of duplication of effort, lack of coordination and leadership. Our role should be to provide leadership, better coordinate and communicate regional activity in this field to identify synergistic activity, reduce duplication and promote good practice.

The market pull for new environmental technologies is increasing as energy costs continue to rise and companies recognise the wider benefits of adopting the corporate responsibility agenda. Our challenge is to ensure that NW businesses respond to this market pull through innovation and the commercial exploitation of new low carbon products. Our role should be to: ensure NW businesses have access to high quality market intelligence in order that they can identify the opportunities; support innovation by providing support for R&D and facilitating networking between businesses and academia; and ensure that businesses have access to appropriate advice and finance packages in order that the innovation process results in real business growth and opportunities.

Outcomes

The outcomes we are seeking to achieve are those set out Climate Change Action Plan's vision. By 2010 we will:

- Increase the value of the region's energy and environmental technologies sector.
- Identify the most climate vulnerable areas and sectors in the region, highlighting the effects of unavoidable climate change.

- Promote behavioural changes through engaging, encouraging, enabling, exemplifying and catalysing actions which will lead to the more sustainable consumption and production of energy.
- Improve the coordination of and communicate regional activity, reducing duplication, identifying synergistic activity and sharing good practice.

We will assist the region towards meeting or exceeding targets set by central government for greenhouse gas emission reductions of 20% by 2020 and 60% by 2050 (relative to 1990 levels).

For sustainable consumption and production (SCP) we will:

- Assist a minimum of 5,000 NW businesses with their resource efficiency by April 2011.
- Help NW companies save £69m through SCP by April 2011.
- Ensure single point of access for SCP advice for NW businesses (Business Link Environment Connect (BLEC)) is easy to contact, comprehensive and business focused by March 2009.
- Achieve a 20% increase in number of NW businesses contacting Business Link for environmental advice by April 2011.
- Identify and achieve specific targets that exemplify the NW as a region committed to SCP by April 2011 including raw material savings, waste diverted from landfill, CO2 savings and water savings.

We will ensure we meet these SCP outcome targets, initiate a minimum of four SCP programmes by July 2009 and work to improve attitude towards SCP in order to address legislative, planning and attitudinal barriers through CSR activities by 2011.

Resulting Activity

Actions and initiatives supporting delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan will include; Capacity support; Research & development; Initiatives to support domestic energy efficiency and low carbon transport; Improving low carbon skills and awareness; Demonstration programmes to exemplify best practise; Improved policy and planning frameworks for a low carbon economy; Initiatives to reducing emissions from high energy users and offset unavoidable emissions.

Spatial Implications

The climate change agenda is necessarily regional in its focus. However, the engagement with Sub-Regional Partnerships is identified in the Climate Change Action Plan as a critical factor in ensuring the delivery of the plan. Sustainable consumption and production will have a regional focus.

11. MARKETING THE REGION

Objective

To improve the image of the region to do businesses in and as a visitor and tourist destination by countering outdated negative perceptions and promote its unique opportunities and strengths.

Investment: £27.5 million

RES Link

This objective delivers on our responsibilities under RES Actions to promote the image of the region (RES Action 95) and those to maximise cultural and major event opportunities, especially RES Actions 98 (major events) and 99 (London 2012). It also includes our support for RES Transformational Action 96 - Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008

Rationale

The biggest market failure with regard to marketing the region is imperfect information. Awareness of the region and its core cities of Manchester and Liverpool are good, but perceptions of it (and them) as a place to do business and visit are mixed. The region has performed relatively well in FDI terms, however, the region's business image to those outside the region is more of a weakness than a strength. The competition for tourists is becoming more intense as short haul flights and new markets increase choice for consumers. In order to maintain and grow visitor numbers the region has to undertake coordinated marketing. Shortfalls in information regarding the region as a place to do business and visit have magnified the mixed perception of the region. Our role should be to better inform potential investors and visitors of the unique opportunities and strengths the Northwest has to offer.

Hosting major events is one way to counter negatives perceptions, along with the direct contribution to the economy that these events can make. This is our rationale for supporting such events.

Outcomes

Our outcomes include:

- A 15% improvement in perceptions of the region as a location for business investment between 2006 and 2009 and a 25% increase between 2006 and 2011
- An increase in the awareness (by people outside the region) of cultural experiences in Liverpool and Manchester from 2% to 10% by 2010.
- An increase in positive perceptions of the region's beautiful landscapes and natural attractions from 46% to 56% in the same period
- Major events contributing £45m to the regional economy for 2008-2011 and bringing in an additional 1.5m visitors.

Resulting Activity

We will be undertaking the following types of activity to achieve these objectives:

- Deliver marketing programmes that promote the region and its destination brands to defined national and international visitor markets - this will include all themed visitor marketing for the region and supporting the 5 Tourist Boards to promote their destinations and key messages for Manchester, Liverpool 08, Lancashire & Blackpool, Cumbria the Lake District, and Visit Chester & Cheshire.
- Bid for and develop major cultural, sporting and business events to attract national and international visitors to our key destinations. This will include supporting defined events within the Liverpool 08 Programme, Blackpool 365 and the Manchester International Festival amongst others. Promote the region and its key sports facilities as potential training camps for Olympic teams competing in London 2012 and implement activity to ensure the region can benefit from the Games.
- Deliver marketing programmes that change perceptions of the region's economic strengths and assets and the key priority RES sectors and their locations.

Spatial Implications

This objective will support to the 5 Tourist Boards to promote specific Attack brands of the region. It will also promote growth sectors and their locations around the region. This will involve regional campaigns where appropriate to gain maximum value for money. It will also support the delivery of key messages for Manchester (MIDAS) and Merseyside (TMP). A central purpose of the programme is to build associations between the sub regions (proximity and diversity).

6. Working Together to Deliver the RES

Strong partnership between the public, private and voluntary sector is essential to achieving the economic ambitions of the region, and that increasingly it is NWDA's role to work in partnership to ensure that priorities are set, consistent with the RES, at a local level, but to let local authorities and others take detailed project decisions, where appropriate.

The Northwest has five sub-regions (Cumbria, Cheshire & Warrington, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside) and since mid 2004 the Agency has been working closely with **sub regional partnerships** (Cumbria Vision, Cheshire & Warrington Economic Alliance, Manchester Enterprises, Lancashire Economic Partnership and The Mersey Partnership).

During 2006/07, each sub-region developed action plans (SRAPs) that set out clear economic development plans and priorities for each sub region, consistent with the RES, and capture the majority of public and private sector investment that help deliver RES priorities and transformational actions. These SRP Action Plans (which have been refreshed in 2007/8), together with developments such as Multi Area Agreements, will be increasingly important in determining individual investments, with NWDA agreeing overall priorities to ensure outcomes and outputs are achieved consistent with achieving the overall RES vision.

The Agency has important strategic regional relationships with **Government Office for the Northwest (GONW)** and the **Northwest Regional Assembly (NWRA)**. Many issues are handled on a tripartite basis through a **Regional Strategy Team (RST)** that meets on a quarterly basis. The nature of the relationship between the Agency and NWRA will evolve within the Corporate Plan period as the recommendations of SNR are implemented and the RST will be an increasingly important forum in this context. As set out earlier, we have always sought to align the regional strategies through joint working and will formally progress this as part of SNR implementation.

NWDA has signed a protocol with NWRA around Scrutiny and fully cooperates with NWRA on scrutiny issues. It has proved to be a very useful process in terms of helping shape the implementation of the current RES and looking forward to the next RES or Regional Strategy. Although proposals are still being developed by NWRA, the successor body to NWRA is likely to involve some form of Northwest Strategic Partnership, based on the current Regional Assembly Executive, including a sub committee focused on Scrutiny. NWDA will continue to engage fully with this committee. Other sub committees are likely to be established to enable LA members to be fully involved in strategy development.

On a **pan regional** level, we will build on our successful arrangements for working through the **Northern Way Growth Strategy** between the three Northern RDAs, and sharpen the strategic focus of the Northern Way in three priority areas of transport, innovation in industry and increasing private sector investment. The three northern RDAs will collaborate on transformational actions achieving strategic pan-Northern benefits.

Delegation and Programme Management

The 2007 Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration set out government policy to ensure that economic development investment decisions are taken at the appropriate spatial level.

The NWDA, in consultation with other RDAs is developing a policy framework and principles to enable us to work with partners to identify the most appropriate level for delivery of our major programmes. We are committed to adopting a strategic role with delivery and decision making being taken at the most appropriate level. This will ensure that regional objectives are met alongside those of National Policy. The detailed nature of delivery for all our activity will be finalised as the programmes and projects set out in this plan are implemented in conjunction with partners and as legislation allows. We will put in place a contract management approach to ensure delivery of specific outcomes and outputs to contribute to our strategic objectives. This will be directly linked to existing governance frameworks such as LAAs, MAAs or Special Purpose Vehicles, where appropriate.

European Programmes (including ERDF)

The transfer of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to NWDA presents a major opportunity for the Agency and partners. The programme, worth £500m, is the largest English ERDF programme. It has been designed to be consistent with the RES (as the region's expression of the EU's Lisbon priorities).

Although very challenging in terms of spend targets, the programme presents a golden opportunity for integrated working between the Agency, its partners and the wider European regional economic development Agenda. The investment priorities dovetail very closely with the priorities in the RES and SRAPs. Where possible we will aim to streamline a whole host of disparate processes, including those which applicants will need to go through to access and claim resources. This should also further contribute to our drive to simplify business support.

NWDA has been heavily involved in the development of the new ESF and ERDF programmes, the latter specifically designed to reflect the priorities expressed in the RES. During 2008-09, the region's European Framework will be reviewed and adjusted to reflect progress towards a single integrated regional strategy as well as the EU's agenda which is increasingly focused on further CAP reform and the implementation of the Lisbon Growth and Employment agenda. NWDA will also increasingly get involved with the Territorial Cooperation programmes.

Business Support Simplification (BSSP)

The NWDA is committed to delivering on the principles of the Business Support Simplification Programme, a Treasury led initiative managed by a central team based in DBERR.

As part of our initial drive to achieve a simplified business support landscape in the Northwest, the NWDA transformed the previous Business Link operations with the launch of Business Link Northwest on 1 April 2007.

Our priorities for achieving simplification are now focussed in three key areas:

- Influencing National Programme Development through activities such as the National Steering Group, Programme Work Streams and supporting DIUS on implementing integrated Skills Brokerage
- Driving Regional Facilitation and Communications through activities such as the NW Simplification Steering Board, Regional Stakeholder Events and a joint approach with Government Office NW
- Leadership in Transition & Implementation through activities such as internal project harmonisation, guiding future Strategic Investment Planning Process, alignment of Project Approval Process and embedding within EU Fund Management.

Our overarching objective is to achieve a shared framework for the Region for collaboration, coordination and co-investment in business support activities by 2010.

Lead role Responsibility

The NWDA, in our Lead Role for Skills & Employment, has the ultimate objective of challenging, supporting and implementing Government policy that will enable growth and prosperity in the regions, by supporting employers in building a world-class workforce. This role provides a collective voice from RDAs, finding agreement on key policy issues and making public those positions. This then is utilised in working with Government Departments to influence, inform and negotiate new and emerging policy so that it reflects an RDA economic perspective that can respect regional differences. Our efforts will focus on:

- Supporting and facilitating communication between Government Departments, partner organisations and the RDAs and to raise the profile of skills – so that it is seen as integral to the economic agenda.
- Facilitate the sharing of best practice – working with employers and partners, celebrating what works and using this to inform future policy decisions.

Key to the success of this role will be the building and maintaining of positive relationships, constant communication and having clarity of position that can respond to ever changing priorities. It will therefore be important for the Lead Role to lobby support for policies which are important to economic growth, and to enable Departments and national partners to have a voice within the RDAs through the NWDA and the national skills group.

Risk Management

The Agency operates and intervenes in areas of market failure to incentivise or catalyse markets and attract sustainable private sector investment where it would not otherwise occur. These are often high-risk areas where environment and markets must be developed before they become attractive to private investors and other public sector bodies. Our operation is underpinned by a forward looking active risk management system. This describes and considers the full range of threats and opportunities, which could be faced, in order to support our decision making on project, programmes and policy. The risk profile of all our operations will continue to

be actively assessed, defined and communicated at all levels of the organisation, enabling the confident execution of this plan.

Equality and Diversity and Opportunities for all

The Agency is committed to ensuring the economic participation of all within the region and recognises the vibrant diversity of the Northwest's people and communities as a real economic asset. Social inclusion has been integrated and mainstreamed into the RES and Corporate plan, Specifically, within the RES, NWDA is responsible with GONW and NWRA to deliver the Regional Equality and Diversity Strategy.

Equality and Diversity is therefore central to the region's economic success and our ability to ensure that everyone is fully able to participate in our regional economy and society. We will systematically apply the use of Equality Impact assessments to the development and appraisal of all programmes and projects supported by the agency and ensure that we have corporate systems and processes in place to integrate Equality and diversity into all our policies and programmes. Through effective leadership we will ensure that our staff and partners understand the economic importance of the equality and diversity agenda. We will also pursue some projects that directly support the implementation of the Regional Equality and Diversity Strategy.

Sustainable Development

The Agency has a legal duty and is committed to delivering sustainable economic development and meeting its legal objectives. This commitment is in line with the government's ambition of enabling all people to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. It is for this reason that environmental issues and rural affairs have been integrated and mainstreamed into the corporate plan.

The Agency will continually improve our environmental performance by putting in place a carbon management plan for the organisation, including assessment and monitoring of the carbon emissions of projects funded through the single programme. We will also pursue a range of projects which support the development of a low carbon economy, via the BREW initiative and also via the regional Climate Change Action Plan.

Energy White Paper (EWP) and Waste Strategy

The Agency working in partnership with the Government Office, Regional Assembly and other partners will provide the strategic lead for the regional implementation of the EWP, which identifies specific responsibilities.

- Identify the priority technologies which will promote carbon reduction for support in their region;
- Support SMEs with energy efficiency advice (as part of the Business Link offering);
- Apply carbon emission standards above Building Regulations for developments that we support;

- Play an advocacy role for the development of large energy infrastructure projects;
- Work as a as a key partner in the production of 'heat maps' to facilitate the more widespread adoption of Combined Heat and Power;
- Support the introduction of innovative financing models to facilitate the introduction of distributed generation schemes;
- Work with LSC, Sector Skills Councils employers etc to develop a strategy to ensure that the workforce has the requisite skills.

NWDA plans to lead by example and has set a carbon reduction target as described under our objective for climate change and sustainable production and consumption.

The Government's "Waste Strategy for England" in 2007, recognised the role of RDAs in improving resource efficiency in businesses and encouraging the development and uptake of environmental technologies. NWDA will meet this role through the coordination of the Northwest Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) programme. BREW provides support for Northwest businesses to increase profits by applying energy conservation, minimising and waste generation. During 2008/09 to 2010/11 the Agency will address the recommendations of the Waste Strategy, in partnership with sub-regional organisations.

Climate Change

NWDA has led the development and commenced implementation of the Northwest Climate Change Action Plan. The Agency has formed a regional Climate Change Partnership to drive delivery of the Action Plan and is hosting a regional Climate Change Unit to coordinate activity. Projects and programmes to deliver the Action Plan are detailed under the Climate Change objective. In addition, all RDAs made commitments to Government in "Tackling Climate Change in the Regions" to strengthen our actions to address the climate change agenda.

7. Evaluation and Performance Management

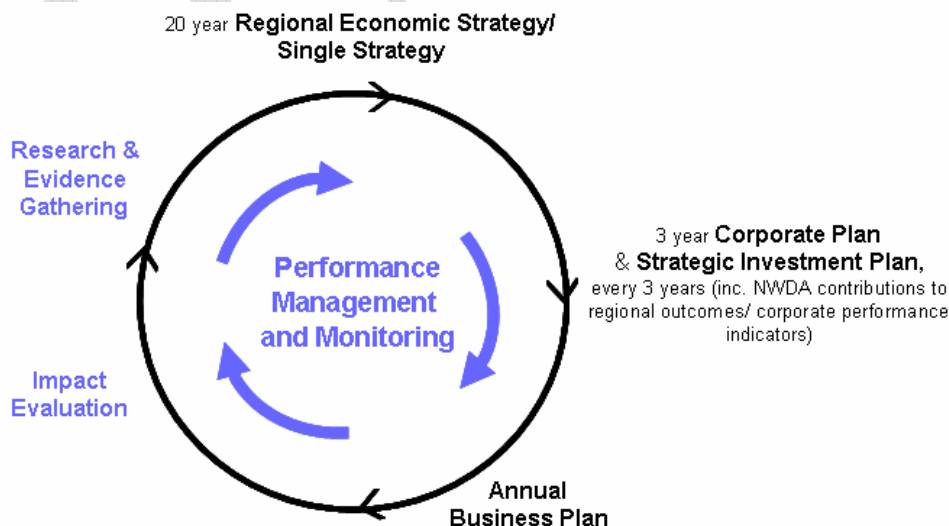
The Agency operates a robust performance monitoring and evaluation system as acknowledged by the NAO's Independent Performance Assessment (IPA) 2006. This will be fully reviewed in 2008/09 as we move from a role of project management to performance management at a strategic level as outlined earlier. We will implement formal programme management within the Agency.

The Agency's evaluation and performance management framework is designed to enable us identify whether we are achieving our stated objectives and priorities to help meet the Government and other partner's expectations and identify areas for improving delivery and the way we deliver. It links the RES objectives with corporate objectives, which are in turn linked to directorate, and personal objectives.

It has been designed to enable us to understand what we are trying to achieve, develop effective ways of delivering our priorities, knowing that we are achieving to a high standard and looking at how we can improve based on previous learning and experiences. Evaluation is central to our efforts to continually improve delivery through evidence based policy and decision making and is reflected within the Agency's Corporate and Business Priorities.

The Agency's performance management framework can be summarised by the diagram 1 below.

Diagram 1: Current Performance Management and Monitoring Framework (to be reviewed in light of move to programme management and other changes to NWDA role as a result of SNR)



Continuous Performance Management and Monitoring Cycle				
Clear Objectives measures and targets	Business Plan Performance	Directorate Objectives	Team Objectives	Personal Objectives
Accountability	EMB/Board	Executive Director	Senior Manager	Individual and Line Manager
Monitoring and Reporting	Exec Directors via RPMG ²	Senior Manager	Team Meetings	Performance Appraisal

Over the past year, the Agency has strengthened its internal evaluation and now has dedicated resources to advise and support the drawing up and commissioning of evaluation plans. We have also implemented a comprehensive and integrated evaluation process, including in depth work to improve our understanding of market failure and its integration into the project development and decision process. Our evaluation process defines three stages of evaluation; formative or ex-ante stage, monitoring and summative or ex-post stage. This has been designed to support programme and project evaluation and is underpinned by a robust appraisal process which rigorously reviews the rationale for the Agency's intervention and sets out clear requirements for evaluating the impact of those interventions. A cross agency Evaluation Panel reviews the objectives of each project and programme and establishes at the start the baseline data and information that will be required to evaluation whether an intervention has had the desired impacts at the end.

Evaluation reports are produced which can clearly demonstrate the achievement of impacts (as opposed to outputs) and importantly can demonstrate net (as opposed to gross) impacts. The next key phase is to ensure that these evaluation messages are increasingly used to influence future decision making. The Agency will be publishing its evaluations in support of its policy of sharing lessons and best practice.

NWDA has a clear 3-year programme of evaluation, with all programmes and projects required to draw up formal evaluation plans setting out information requirements, which are IEF compliant. Evaluations from this programme will provide the evidence, which will inform the next impact report. This programme is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it captures all emerging findings and evidence from all the Agency's programmes and projects in a comprehensive manner. Our evaluation framework is backed up by an ongoing training and engagement programme with all staff, partners and stakeholders.

The Agency has taken a leadership role in driving improvements in evaluation of impact across the RDA network and is also exploring with undertaking collaborative evaluations with other RDAs where possible.

The overall performance framework is overseen by the Agency's Risk and Performance Management Group which reports to the Executive Management Board. Progress is monitored by way of monthly output and key performance indicators review, quarterly business plan monitoring (including risk management and monitoring) and monthly financial management monitoring.

8. Organisational Change

This Corporate Plan covers a period of significant change for NWDA as it moves from direct delivery to a strategic, commissioning role. This will require a major programme of cultural and organisational change, to ensure that the agency has the required skills and that local delivery organisations have the required capacity. We do not underestimate the impact of this change and are determined to work with partners to implement it for the benefit of the region.

This Corporate Plan represents the start of this change process. Many of our systems and structures will also need to change to become fit for purpose in this new role. NWDA has put in place an organisational change process to examine the implications of these changes and bring forward proposals to the Board.

NWDA will increase strategic commissioning and contract management skills, further develop its economic policy and research function, strengthen its capacity in planning, transport and housing strategy and reduce its focus on project development and delivery.

We will also work with Local Authorities to improve capacity for economic development delivery as outlined in SNR. This will involve the secondment or transfer of delivery staff to support local authority capacity improvements where appropriate.

It will also work with the private and voluntary sector to ensure that the mechanisms and resources are in place to ensure that they are fully engaged in the development of the regions single strategy.

An immediate requirement is to take on board the management of ERDF. Budget 2007 also included the transfer of Skills Brokerage to RDAs.

Improvement Plan

Following the publication of the Independent Performance Assessment (IPA) for the NWDA in 2006, the NWDA produced an IPA Improvement Plan to address the areas identified by the NAO that required attention. The IPA Improvement Plan includes nine Areas for Improvement with thirty individual actions sitting underneath. The plan also brings together all the various other improvement plans within the Agency into one consolidated plan.

All actions are included in the Agency's Internal Business Plan and progress is monitored as part of the quarterly business plan monitoring. The process is coordinated by the Corporate Performance Team and is overseen and reviewed by the Risk and Performance Management Group. Progress towards achievement of key actions identified within the Improvement Plan is on track with all milestones due for action having been addressed and performance is reported to the Board on a regular basis.

9. Resource Plan and Estates Policy

Comprehensive Spending Review

The overall CSR settlement represents a 5% real-terms reduction on the Agency's cash and capital baselines of 2007/08. Over and above this, Government has also requested further levels of administrative cost savings (see below) which will be moved to support Programme delivery and VFM Programme savings, both of which will be reinvested in delivering the Agency's agreed priorities. These include the specific responsibilities mentioned in the CSR including managing the response to industrial crises or natural disasters, supporting collaboration with the Technology Strategy Board, sustaining the ONS's regional presence and providing additional funding for the Northern Way.

The Agency will utilise its existing efficiency performance management framework, introduced to achieve savings under the Gershon Review, to drive cost reduction across its overhead and Programme Support functions.

Administrative Savings

NWDA plan to achieve £4.595m sustainable administrative efficiency savings over the CSR period. Baseline administrative costs of £37.571m (8.1% of total funding) will be reduced to a resource budget of £35.733m in 2010/11, (7.7% of total funding) and these targets have been incorporated into the Agency's financial planning.

Programme Savings

Programme efficiencies will be realised through a mix of cash reductions and VFM savings. Focus will be on ensuring Programmes and Projects are efficient in their design and implementation.

The tables below show a summary of NWDA income and expenditure, as well as our proposed outline programme expenditure by objective. Further details can be found within our Strategic Investment Plan.

Corporate Budget 2008/2011

Income and Expenditure Summary

	Financial Year														
	2008/09 £m				2009/10 £m					2010/11 £m					
Income	Rev	Non-cash	Capi	EU											
Rents	1.7			1.7	1.8				1.8	1.7				1.7	
PPP Drawdown			12.0	12.0		10.0			10.0		10.0			10.0	
PPP Loan Notes &	5.0			5.0	4.0				4.0	3.0				3.0	
Disposal of Assets			4.9	4.9		7.2			7.2		2.1			2.1	
Clawback			11.2	11.2		3.4			3.4		1.9			1.9	
EU Funding	0.3		6.2	6.5		-			-		-			-	
Coalfields Funding	4.3		9.2	13.5	1.6	0.2			1.8		-			-	
Other Income	0.7		1.4	2.1	0.7				0.7	0.7				0.7	
Grant in Aid	184.2	11.9	195.5	391.6	183.8	11.9	190.7		386.4	179.4	11.9	186.1		377.4	
EU Programme				212.2				86.5	86.5				72.3	72.3	
TOTAL INCOME	196.2	11.9	240.4	212.2	660.7	191.9	11.9	211.5	86.5	501.8	184.8	11.9	200.1	72.3	469.1
Expenditure															
Admin costs	36.7			36.7	35.7				35.7	35.7				35.7	
Assembly functions	0.5			0.5	0.5				0.5	0.5				0.5	
Non-Cash costs		11.9		11.9		11.9			11.9		11.9			11.9	
Economic Shock and Contingency			3.0	3.0		3.0			3.0		3.0			3.0	
Capital Exp on Operating Assets			0.5	0.5		0.5			0.5		0.5			0.5	
EU Administration				1.2	1.2			1.2	1.2				1.2	1.2	
Overheads	37.2	11.9	3.5	1.2	53.8	36.2	11.9	3.5	1.2	52.8	36.2	11.9	3.5	1.2	52.8
Irrecoverable VAT	5.3			5.3	5.5				5.5	6.7				6.7	
Portfolio spend	153.7	-	236.9	390.6	150.2	-	208.0		358.2	141.9	-	196.6		338.5	
EU Programme				211.0				85.3	85.3				71.1	71.1	
Programme	159.0	-	236.9	211.0	606.9	155.7	-	208.0	85.3	449.0	148.6	-	196.6	71.1	416.3
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	196.2	11.9	240.4	212.2	660.7	191.9	11.9	211.5	86.5	501.8	184.8	11.9	200.1	72.3	469.1

PPP income in 2008/09 is forecast at maximum drawdown.

This will not be required if the economic shock contingency is not required. In future years, the regular draw down of £10m is forecast.

Admin costs agree with the CSR targets given to us by DBERR. These are "top down" figures.

Corporate Plan Allocations 2008/11				
	£m			
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Growth sectors	53.9	55.0	56.8	165.7
Enterprise Support	60.3	56.5	62.3	179.1
Innovation	30.4	31.3	26.1	87.8
Internationalisation	6.3	6.0	6.0	18.3
Leadership and Management	6.5	9.0	9.1	24.6
High Level Skills Development	27.8	19.8	18.3	65.9
Size of the Workforce	6.7	8.3	8.3	23.3
Employment Sites and Premises	30.0	29.8	29.1	88.9
Conditions for Private Sector Investment	131.5	107.5	92.5	331.5
Climate Change and Sustainable Consumption	9.6	8.8	8.4	26.8
Marketing the Region	10.4	10.0	7.1	27.5
Other	17.2	16.2	14.5	47.9
Total	390.6	358.2	338.5	1,087.3

Estates and Assets Policy

NWDA has a portfolio of project assets and development land which enables the Agency to work with partners and the private sector to deliver property based projects. The Agency makes development opportunities available to the private sector and by doing this, in addition to facilitating the physical development; the Agency also assists businesses in creating or safeguarding employment.

The Agency's portfolio is primarily located in Merseyside and West Cumbria where it works with partners such as Liverpool Vision, Liverpool Land Development Company and Cumbria Vision. In addition, there are notable projects at Ancoats Urban Village, Kingsway Business Park and Daresbury Science Park, where the Property Team is working with colleagues and partners to deliver these projects.

The Agency's commercial portfolio was transferred into a joint venture, or PPP, in December 2006. This is a 10-year venture where the assets are managed by the private sector partner to deliver outputs for the Agency. The operation of the PPP is overseen by the Property Team in conjunction with the Legal and Finance Teams.

The Agency has an Asset Management Strategy document addressing the management, performance and exit strategy for each of the assets in the portfolio. The document also includes an Estate Strategy covering all of the Agency's operational properties.

DRAFT

Annexes and Tables

Annex 1: Research priorities

NWDA uses and commissions research both to inform its internal policy and project development and to fulfil its role in strengthening the regional evidence base and how it is used. The research function within the Policy Directorate exists to supply timely, high quality and accurate data, information and intelligence to both support the strategic need of the Agency (Research Team) and the evidence base needs of the region (Regional Intelligence Unit/ Regional Observatory).

At the beginning of this corporate plan cycle, we are developing the evidence base for the next Single Regional Strategy, which is building on the foundations created by monitoring the current RES and developing a greater understanding of impact and evaluation.

By taking a careful look at the gaps in our knowledge we have developed a Research programme which explores the issues raised by current RES monitoring, the risks and assumptions we need to monitor and the gaps in our knowledge. This programme has been widely discussed and agreed within the region, including through the RES Advisory Group.

This themed regional evidence base is being gathered alongside the current development of a series of evidence papers, the purpose of which are to stimulate debate and discussion in the development of the next strategy. They re-visit the current RES factors, taking each factor and looking in depth at the evidence available, monitoring progress against outcome indicators and using wider evidence nationally and regionally. They will cover the need for investment, market and other failures and draw out any challenging questions the region should be asking itself.

The Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) has five major themes of research which are directly related to the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), Enterprise, Skills and Education, People and Jobs, Infrastructure and Quality of Life

These themes set out our regional priorities and remain the area of focus over the next 12 months.

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**Review of Computer Usage by Members
17th January 2008****Report of Head of Democratic Services and Head of
Customer & Information Services****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides an opportunity to review computer usage by Members and whether current provision is appropriate for Members' needs.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

That officers be requested to carry out a survey of Members' views on a range of issues relating to the usage of computers by Members for Council business and report back to this Committee on the results and any recommendations for change.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The initiative to provide Members with laptops commenced in 2003/04 with a pilot project including Cabinet Members and a number of Chairmen. This pilot was reviewed in August 2004 following which the decision to roll the programme out to all Members was confirmed and procedures and support mechanisms were introduced in accordance with the results of the pilot review, including the attached Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) which was signed by all Members with a laptop or using their own PC to access the Council's systems.
- 1.2 At the same time it had been agreed to purchase a computerised Committee management system to provide all Council meeting documentation and information electronically and this went live in September 2004. The use of the system has grown since the first agenda were produced this way and very few paper copies are now printed. The Forward Plan is also now produced electronically and a wide range of information can be accessed through the 'Modern.Gov' system. Further developments are ongoing both in terms of what is accessible on line and 'behind the scenes' processes for officers preparing reports and monitoring the implementation of decisions.
- 1.3 Following the elections in May 2007, all Members now have a laptop or 'Netilla' access from their own computer and the Council is fully electronic. Indeed it is intended that this meeting be run on a paperless basis experimentally to see if it will be practical to dispense with printed agenda in future.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 Over time since the introduction of the Committee Management System and the provision of laptops, the reliance on electronic communication has increased, with distribution of hard copy information reduced now to once per week and officers being encouraged to provide as much information as possible electronically.
- 2.2 All new Members signed up to the current AUP following the elections in May 2007 and it would seem an appropriate moment therefore to review how the provision of electronic equipment and the support offered by the Council is working in practice and to consider whether there should be any amendments to the system currently in place.
- 2.3 It is suggested that the following issues should be considered as part of this review:
 - The type of equipment provided
 - The Council's policies in relation to the use of the equipment
 - The level of technical support provided
 - The level and style of training available
 - The availability and ease of access to necessary information

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 3.1 Option 1 – to confirm the existing arrangements as the most appropriate provision and level of support for Members without further investigation.
- 3.2 Option 2 – to amend the existing arrangements without further investigation.
- 3.3 Option 3 – to undertake a review of the existing arrangements. This review can be undertaken in one of several ways or using a combination of the following:
 - Questionnaire to all Members
 - Group responses following Group discussions
 - Consideration by this Committee
 - Informal meeting of this Committee with all Members invited.
- 3.4 Whilst Members of this Committee have first hand knowledge to enable them to take a view on whether options 1 or 2 are appropriate, there are a further 53 Members' views to take into account. Option 3 will provide the necessary evidence to justify either confirmation or amendment of the current arrangements.

4.0 Officers Preferred Option

- 4.1 The officer preferred option is to undertake a survey of all Members with specific questions relating to the issues listed in 2.3 above and providing an opportunity for any further general comments, with the results of this survey being reported back to this Committee for consideration together with any officer recommendations for changed based on the outcome of the survey. This would not preclude Groups discussing the matter prior to individuals responding.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 All Members are now provided with a Council laptop or have access to Council systems and with an increasing amount of information now being available via computers, Members are requested to review the Service provided to ensure that they receive what they need to undertake Council business.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications to this report. The financial implications of any recommendations which result from a review of the current service provision will be included in future reports.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report. The legal implications of any recommendations which result from a review of the current service provision will be included in future reports.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact Officer: Gillian Noall
Telephone: 01524 582060
E-mail: gnoall@lancaster.gov.uk

MEMBERS' LAPTOP AND COMPUTER USAGE POLICY

This document is to be used as a guideline for managing and implementing email and internet usage for members using Council notebooks or accessing the Council's computer system from their own PC equipment.

The document gives clear guidance about the use of Internet access and email and the reasons for these rules. It is vital that Members read this document carefully. If there is anything a Member does not understand it is their responsibility to ask for an explanation. Once you have read and understood this policy you will be required to formally sign up to the policy and guidelines and ensure that they are adhered to.

It should be borne in mind that this document relates to a particular medium and technology and is not intended to be read in isolation. It should be considered with and complements other Council policy and guidance, in particular the Code of Conduct for Members. If Members have any doubt as to the acceptability or legality of an action, they should consult the Monitoring Officer for advice BEFORE taking any action.

Security

For security reasons it is essential that all Members change their initial password to one which is known only to themselves and to alter this on a regular basis. **Members must not disclose their password to any other individual unless directed by the Monitoring Officer and will be held accountable for any usage under their name and password.**

- You must keep your passwords confidential and safe.
- Do not write your passwords down and change them at least every two months.
- Passwords must be a minimum of six characters in length, a combination of numbers and letters, and must not be something that is easily guessed, such as family names, car registration numbers, dates etc.

Laptops should be stored securely and in particular should not be left in unattended vehicles.

Internet Access and the World Wide Web

The Council needs to achieve a balance whereby it allows Members to make full use of this important resource and to develop appropriate skills and knowledge, but also to introduce safeguards to prevent and detect misuse and effectively manage the risks associated with the internet and email.

Access to the Internet is provided to assist Members and they should not use or try to use a Council internet account or email facility for any of the following purposes:

- Breaking through security controls whether on the Council's equipment or on any other computer system
- Logging onto the Council's internet service under a different person's user name and password
- Intercepting or accessing internet traffic (such as email) not intended for him/or her
- Intentionally accessing or transmitting computer viruses or similar software
- Creating or intentionally accessing, circulating, transmitting, distributing, storing or downloading any material which is offensive, obscene, sexually explicit, indecent, pornographic, racist, sexist, defamatory, libellous, menacing, hateful, incites or depicts violence or describes techniques for criminal or terrorist acts or otherwise represents values which are contrary to Council policy

- Knowingly doing anything which is illegal under English law or the law of any other relevant country
- Political lobbying or private business (including commercial activities)
- Any activities which could cause congestion and disruption of networks or systems
- The use of aliases is not permitted in official activities.

All Members are advised to be careful when using the internet. Liabilities may arise through the creation of contracts, misstatements, defamatory remarks, breach of copyright, the disclosure of protected data and human rights violations. The Council may or may not be vicariously liable for the actions of its Members or the Member may be personally liable.

Members should be aware that they can get connected accidentally to web sites that may contain illegal or offensive material. This can happen by following a link to a site whose content could not have been foreseen. If this occurs Members are advised to disconnect immediately, make a note of the site details and of the operation attempted and inform the Monitoring Officer.

Backup

Members should be aware that the shared areas on the network are regularly backed up by Information Services. Any data held on a PC hard drive (e.g. 'C:\') however is vulnerable to loss or damage and is not backed up centrally.

If you choose to store information on removable media, for example pen drives or CDs, then you are responsible for ensuring that this information is kept safe and backed up.

Virus Protection

Anti-virus software is automatically provided on the Council network and it must not be disabled or switched off. Anti-virus software is included for all notebooks and this is automatically updated whenever machines connect to the Council's network.

Email is a major source of virus infection, and whilst we take every precaution to try and eliminate the risk of infection, there may be occasions where a new virus manages to get through. You must be aware of this risk and report any unusual emails to the helpdesk immediately.

Downloading Software

You should not install, copy, or download, any unauthorised software, including games, to or from another computer. Information Services will copy software where necessary for authorised use within licence limits. If you are unsure whether your software is authorised contact the Information Services helpdesk.

Some software may be legitimately downloaded from the internet. A list of such software will be maintained by Information Services and published on the intranet.

Emails

- Email communications are not guaranteed to arrive at their destination within a particular time or at all
- Confidential information is not secure unless appropriate encryption is applied to protect it. Users should check carefully the correct reproduction of an email address
- Users must not abuse others even in response to abuse directed at them
- Users must not use email to sexually harass or threaten anyone in any manner
- The inappropriate use of upper case email is generally interpreted as SHOUTING and should be avoided
- Users must not use anonymous mailing services to conceal their identity or falsify emails to make them appear to originate from someone else or provide false information to any internet service
- Users tend to regard email like telephone calls and to be less discreet than in a letter giving rise to significant risk of vicarious liability for defamatory statements. All emails sent via the Council's system will include an official disclaimer to protect the Council's interests
- Users should be aware that sending excessively large emails or attachments can cause problems for the system and in extreme cases cause it to fail.

The Council accepts no responsibility for the security of personal data and it should be noted that all emails stored on the system belong to the Council.

Monitoring

It should be noted that all communications are liable to be monitored and that there shall be no expectation of privacy. Emails that are strictly private should not be received or sent on the Council's system. It should be emphasised however that monitoring is only undertaken for the purposes set out below. Usage of internet and emails may be monitored or recorded by the Council at any time without notice or consent for the following purposes:

- To establish the existence of facts relevant to Council business
- To ascertain compliance with regulatory or self regulatory practices or procedures relevant to Council business
- To ascertain or demonstrate standards which are or ought to be received by persons using the system
- To prevent or detect a crime
- To investigate or detect the unauthorised use of the system
- To ensure the effective operation of the system.

The Council will not use personal information collected through monitoring for purposes other than that for which the monitoring was undertaken unless the information is such that no reasonable Council could ignore it, i.e. it reveals criminal activity.

Notebook and printer support

Summary

This service includes the resolution of all day-to-day problems that might occur with notebooks and printers. It specifically includes the following.

- Providing a Help Desk to handle all calls
- Maintaining all notebooks and printers
- Investigation faults for supplied software.
- Providing access to the Council email and Committee Admin systems and the internet via high speed links where they are available.
- Providing anti-virus software for all notebooks
- Providing secure data storage on the Council network

Help Desk phone - 582103

The Help Desk service is available between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday - Friday to report problems, enquire on progress with previously reported problems and to place requests for advice on IS issues. Calls can also be submitted by voice mail, the intranet or by emailing 'helpdesk@lancaster.gov.uk'.

Hardware Maintenance

- Fixing all major hardware related problems on all notebooks and printers within one working day of the equipment being returned to Information Services
- Where a major problem cannot be fixed within the day, a spare notebook and printer are available.

Software Support

Providing a fault investigation service for all faults found with the supplied software. Resetting the laptop to the standard image if necessary

- Microsoft Office and all subsidiary products (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Microsoft Outlook
- Adobe Acrobat

Communications

- Maintaining access to the Council's network.
- Investigating and resolving communications problems jointly with members through third party suppliers where necessary.

Printers

Each printer is supplied with one cartridge of toner and a ream of A4 of paper. Members wishing to print large volumes should email requests to 'membersservices@lancaster.gov.uk' who will print out their requests at the Lancaster Town Hall and put prints into the pigeonholes. Further supplies of paper or print cartridges can be obtained from Members Services for delivery with the weekly distribution or collection from Lancaster Town Hall.

Use of the Committee Management System

Advice and support on the use of the committee management system can be obtained from Members Services by telephoning 582170

Member's responsibilities

Members are responsible for the following.

1. Logging all problems with the Help Desk as soon as possible. The Help Desk should be provided with any additional information requested to help them solve a problem. We will aim to solve many problems using "remote control" software and members will need to remain in phone contact with the Help Desk where this technique is being used and allow remote control of their machines. If problems cannot be solved remotely equipment must be brought to the Old Fire Station.
2. Only using the notebook for the purposes for which it was supplied – i.e. access to the Council's network, using the supplied software and accessing the internet on Council business.
3. To gain approval from IT Services before installing any additional software or deleting any software. Software which is fully licensed and approved can be installed but no support for the software can be provided by IT Services. In the event that such software causes problems IT Services will rebuild the laptop to the standard image.
4. Saving all files etc. on the Councils secure data storage. Any data saved elsewhere e.g. C drive will not be backed up and may be lost permanently.
5. Signing this agreement and the website acceptable use policy (where applicable) and following all corporate policies on security, email access etc.
6. Ensuring that equipment is used safely and in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines
7. Notifying the Help Desk as soon as possible if equipment becomes lost, damaged or stolen. It is the Councillor's responsibility to report any instances of theft to the Police and obtain a crime incident number.
8. Returning any Council owned equipment within 7 days of resigning as a Councillor or failing to be re-elected at the City Council elections.

I agree to abide by the guidelines outlined above :-

Signed

Print Name

Date.....