

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.

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