

REPORT TO CABINET

Open		Would any decisions proposed :			
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory/	Be entirely within Cabinet’s powers to decide		YES/NO	
	Discretionary /	Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO	
	Operational	Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO	
Lead Member: Cllr Simon Ring E-mail: cllr.simon.ring@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted: Cabinet			
		Other Members consulted: R&D Panel			
Lead Officer: Duncan Hall E-mail: Duncan.hall@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial:		Other Officers consulted: Senior Management Team, Planning Policy, Corporate Policy,			
Financial Implications YES/NO	Policy/ Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES/NO	Environmental Considerations YES/NO

Date of meeting: 10 December 2024

WEST NORFOLK ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Summary

This report outlines the development and recommended adoption of the Economic Strategy for West Norfolk. The strategy describes where we want to be in 2045 and our strategic priorities for achieving this vision, building on where we are today. It is accompanied by a detailed Action Plan, setting out specific actions to take to realise the vision.

Changes at a national and regional level, with the government’s integration of Enterprise Partnerships into upper tier authorities and the proposals for Devolution in Norfolk, requires a strong economic policy for the district to set out our vision and priorities for investment to sustain and support economic growth.

The new strategy has been developed during 2024, involving detailed data analysis, evidence gathering and engagement with residents, businesses, stakeholders and partners. The resultant strategy sets out the long-term vision for the Borough to be ‘a model for sustainable, active and inclusive rural communities, where the benefits of economic growth are shared widely, and natural and cultural heritage is preserved, enhanced and celebrated for future generations’.

Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the West Norfolk Economic Strategy (appendix 1)
2. Endorse the revised King’s Lynn Town Board vision and priorities as detailed in section 4.

Reason for Decision

To ensure West Norfolk is in a strong policy position, supported by a robust evidence base to enable the delivery of the new Corporate Strategy objectives. The adoption of an Economic Strategy will determine the priorities for investment and support the

ability to secure investment for economic growth in West Norfolk.

1. Background

- 1.1. The functional economic sub region of King's Lynn, which covers the western part of Norfolk as well as parts of northern Cambridgeshire and southern Lincolnshire, has a population in excess of 200,000. An Economic Strategy is a crucial policy and statement of intent focusing on the opportunities and priorities that will be pursued to deliver growth and realise the economic potential of the borough.
- 1.2. The previous, now outdated West Norfolk Strategic Economic and Infrastructure Investment Plan covered the period 2016 to 2020. This policy sat alongside a wider Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy set out by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, whom for the last 10 years have taken a lead strategic role identifying the strategy, priorities and investment for economic growth in the region. Specific place-based strategies have also been developed at a local level in response to government initiatives including the [King's Lynn Town Investment Plan](#) and [UKSPF West Norfolk Investment Plan](#).
- 1.3. With the ending of core funding from central government for Local Enterprise Partnerships in April 2024, a strong replacement policy and partnership working will be essential to maximising the economic drivers of the area and deliver the priorities.
- 1.4. Following the election of the new Labour government in July 2024, the intention is that areas set out Local Growth Plans to detail how they will work with the private sector, education providers and trade bodies in their area to set a plan for growth that aligns with a national industrial strategy. The West Norfolk Economic Strategy (WNES) has therefore been developed in line with what is expected to be required by central government and to place the borough in a strong position to respond to investment opportunities to deliver growth based in line with the strategy.
- 1.5. Consideration to economic growth needs to be progressed alongside other aspects of the borough's development including land use planning, education and skills, transport, services and the environment. The Local Development Framework's Core Strategy provides the planning framework within which the growth aspirations sit and the development of this strategy will provide a robust basis for informing the next reiteration of the Local Plan.

2. Approach to developing an Economic Strategy

- 2.1. The Borough needs a compelling economic story, which draws together the opportunities which are clearly present to position its vital economic role within Norfolk and the broader region. Fundamental is the unifying vision which captures the breadth and strengths of the Borough and its different economic and population characteristics and provides an agreed position on what we want to collectively achieve that can tie together and inform future project decisions and investment planning over the long-term.
- 2.2. The key objective for the Economic Strategy is to sustain our current economic strengths and deliver a step change in the economic performance of the area by prioritising investment activity that will improve productivity and gross value added (GVA) in the Borough. The strategy has therefore identified the challenges and opportunities to investment including access, infrastructure and targeted business

support; making best use of public funding and assets and encouraging and stimulating private sector investment; and increasing employment through workforce development, raising skills and the levels of qualifications.

- 2.3. The strategy has been developed with extensive data research from Norfolk Office of Data Analysis (NODA) which sets out the existing performance of the borough against a range of metrics and trend data (as detailed in the State of the Capitals Appendix 2).
- 2.4. In addition, a range of consultation and engagement with residents, businesses and stakeholders informed the strategy development through surveys, targeted workshops and focus groups. This informed the development of the draft strategy which was subject to public consultation on September 2024. As a result of the consultation, the WNES (appendix 1) was updated to incorporate feedback where appropriate.
- 2.5. The final WNES sets out 5 priorities for a vibrant economy;
 - Thriving Towns that are destinations for both residents and tourists.
 - Access to education and good work, at all phases of life.
 - Specialised argi-food, engineering, manufacturing and visitor economy with productive jobs and businesses that are a reason to stay in the area, relocate to it and invest in it.
 - Proactive, efficient and sustainable management of our natural resources.
 - Happy, healthy people living in connected inclusive communities with access to housing, health services, social and leisure facilities.
- 2.6. The recommendation to endorse the WNES is the first stage of the process and will inform the next stage to develop an Investment Plan which will determine the priorities for funding for the Borough, for the Council and partners. This will inform future resource planning and project pipeline priorities for the Council and other strategic partners.

3. Norfolk Economic Strategy

- 3.1. In parallel with the development of the WNES, Norfolk County Council has prepared the Norfolk Economic Strategy (Local Growth Plan). The draft strategy was presented to Cabinet for endorsement at its meeting on 17 October 2024. The Cabinet endorsed the strategy subject to some suggested additions and amendments which was fed back to Norfolk County Council. The final Norfolk Economic Strategy is being presented to their Cabinet for adoption, also on 10 December 2024. An update will be provided to Cabinet on the amendments to the Norfolk Economic Strategy at the cabinet meeting.

4. King's Lynn Priorities

- 4.1. During the development of the WNES, the King's Lynn Town Board completed further targeted consultation on the vision and priorities specifically for King's Lynn. Over 1,100 people took part in the consultation either in the survey, or at an event, or through another activity. This included 517 people participating in a survey.
- 4.2. Utilising this extensive consultation, the Town Board has revised its vision and priorities for the town, which replaces those set out in the Town Investment Plan (2021);

Vision: 'In 2035 King's Lynn will be a vibrant and inclusive town for everyone, with a flourishing mixed-use town centre and more people living, working and visiting. It will be easy to travel in to and throughout the town, with a healthy, safe, and welcoming environment. There will be abundant recreational spaces, experiences, and cultural attractions, for people of all ages.'

Priorities:

1. **Improve town centre attractiveness and cultural experience** – Redevelop and enhance key assets including heritage buildings and architecture around the town centre and quayside. Incorporate greenery, wayfinding and public realm enhancements, to improve the overall attractiveness and liveability for both residents and visitors.
2. **Create a successful, modern, mixed-use town centre** which offers a diverse range of reasons to be there, including leisure, residential, offices, cultural offerings, as well as traditional shopping. Transform our high street by repurposing and redeveloping vacant and underused buildings and neglected areas, such as the south end of the high street. Increase opportunities to live and work in and around the town centre, while ensuring sustainable development that respects King's Lynn's heritage.
3. **Enhance connectivity and accessibility** – Reduce congestion and enhance mobility by bringing about a bold modal shift towards active travel and public transport, making bus routes more frequent and better connected to our rural hinterland, and expanding and greening cycling and pedestrian pathways to encourage sustainable travel choices, support healthier lives and progression towards net zero.
4. **Improve safety, security and community wellbeing** – Address concerns of anti-social behaviour and crime in problem areas, particularly around the bus station and the Walks. Invest in facilities and programmes that provide alternative activities and opportunities for young people to make positive social and economic contributions to the town. Support community and voluntary groups in their events and initiatives to reduce health inequalities and promote wellbeing for all residents, contributing to our vision of becoming a 'Marmot Place'.
5. **Raise young people's aspirations and support business and skills growth** – Make King's Lynn a hub for starting and growing businesses by repurposing vacant buildings for commercial use, enhancing digital connectivity, providing support networks, and fostering collaboration to nurture entrepreneurship both in King's Lynn Enterprise Park and the broader local economy. Boost the local talent pool through employment and skills programmes for residents, linked to opportunities in local sectors.

4.3 The revised vision and priorities for King's Lynn provide a further place-based level of detail to guide specific targeted investment in the Borough's principal town, King's Lynn. This is in line with the overall WNES priority specifically for 'Thriving Towns.' These priorities will guide future investment decisions in particular with the revised Long Term Plan for Towns programme planned to be continued by the new government.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 At this stage, there are no financial implications. The Investment Plan will be presented to cabinet in early 2025 which will set out the project pipeline and resources required to support the development and delivery of the economic strategy so the Council is best placed to respond to opportunities to secure investment to achieve the desired ambitions and outcomes for West Norfolk.

6. Policy Implications

6.1 The Economic Strategy is aligned with the Corporate Strategy under the priority to;

‘Promote growth and prosperity to benefit west Norfolk To create job opportunities and attract investment by supporting economic growth and developing skills to support local businesses. To encourage housing development and associated infrastructure that meets local need. Promote west Norfolk as a destination.’

6.2 The WNES will also be the core policy in which other sector specific and spatial plans will be developed from including;

- Local Plan
- King’s Lynn Cultural & Heritage Strategy
- King’s Lynn Transport Strategy
- King’s Lynn & Hunstanton Car parking strategy
- West Norfolk Tourism Development Plan 2022-26
- West Norfolk Housing Needs Assessment

6.3 The evidence gathered and priorities will support the work of the Marmot Place that is currently being initiated.

7 Personnel Implications

None

8 Environmental Considerations

8.1 Clean growth will be an important theme to be explored in the development of the Economic Strategy to ensure West Norfolk has the appropriate skills, support and infrastructure to meet Net Zero targets and address the declared Climate Emergency.

9 Statutory Considerations

None

10 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Provided in Appendix 3.

11 Risk Management Implications

Risk	Risk Implications and Mitigation	Level of Risk
Stakeholder Support	<p>Risk Stakeholders do not support the priorities identified in the Economic Strategy.</p> <p>Consequences Economic Strategy does not reflect the needs of the local area due to lack of stakeholder support.</p> <p>Mitigation Development of the strategy has been built on deep</p>	Low

	and extensive engagement throughout the preparation of the strategy, concluding with a formal consultation on the draft strategy in September 2024 which indicated support for the priorities identified in the strategy.	
External Funding	<p>Risk Funding to support the delivery of the actions identified in the WNES through Devolution and central government do not prevail.</p> <p>Consequences Ability to sustain and achieve economic growth in west Norfolk will be undermined.</p> <p>Mitigation The strategy action plan sets out the role of a range of public bodies and the private sector to support the delivery of the strategy. While there will be an lesser impact that can be made, strength in partnership working and engagement with the private sector will ensure all opportunities are maximized to enable economic growth.</p>	Medium
Staff delivery	<p>Risk Insufficient staff capacity to progress the next stage of implementation of the strategy.</p> <p>Consequences Insufficient staff and expertise will impact on the ability to respond robustly to future investment opportunities, resulting in lost opportunities to deliver economic growth to West Norfolk.</p> <p>Mitigation Review of the existing Regeneration & Economic Development Team to determine level of resource and expertise required to achieve the ambitions in the strategy.</p>	High

12. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

N/A

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: West Norfolk Economic Strategy (final)

Appendix 2: State of the Capitals (final)

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



Name of policy/service/function	West Norfolk Economic Strategy				
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function?	New				
<p>Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened.</p> <p>Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations</p>					
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age	✓			
	Disability			✓	
	Gender			✓	
	Gender Re-assignment			✓	
	Marriage/civil partnership			✓	
	Pregnancy & maternity			✓	
	Race			✓	
	Religion or belief			✓	
	Sexual orientation			✓	
	Other (eg low income, unemployed)	✓			

Question	Answer	Comments
<p>2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?</p>	No	
<p>3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?</p>	Yes	<p>The purpose of the strategy is to improve the socio economic performance and opportunities of communities, particularly those which have significant inequalities and need challenges addressing that will support economic growth and improve productivity.</p>
<p>4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?</p>	Yes	<p>The Economic Strategy will seek to identify the interventions need to improve the economic prosperity, employment and training opportunities for residents and businesses.</p>
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?</p> <p>If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	No	<p>Actions:</p>
		<p>Actions agreed by EWG member:</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</p> <p>Decision agreed by EWG member:</p>		
<p>Assessment completed by:</p> <p>Name</p>	<p>Jemma Curtis</p>	
<p>Job title</p>	<p>Regeneration Programmes Manager</p>	
<p>Date</p>	<p>24th October 2024</p>	