

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 December 2015



Regeneration Statement – Update

Report of Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Regeneration Statement.

Background

- 2 Members will recall that at the meeting of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 23 June 2015 the work programme of the committee was agreed for 2015/16 which identified that an update would be provided to members on the Regeneration Statement.

Current Regeneration Statement 2012 - 2022

- 3 The County Durham Regeneration Statement was developed in 2009 and underpins the 'Altogether Wealthier' theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy for County Durham. It sets an integrated economic development, Planning, housing and transport policy framework for County Durham and outlines the County Durham Economic partnership's approach to delivering its ambitions. The Statement specifies the spatial, social and economic priorities over the coming years whilst recognising the tough economic climate that still exists and the altered landscape of economic development and regeneration.
- 4 The Regeneration Statement was refreshed in 2012 following the experience and evidence gained during the three year period and was agreed by Cabinet on the 24 July 2012. The refreshed Statement identifies the key issues facing the county including an underperforming local economy and high unemployment. The achievement of the pre-recession employment rate will require a substantial level of private sector employment growth to replace and exceed the level of jobs lost through the economic downturn and contraction of the public sector.

- 5 The refreshed Statement suggests how these issues can be tackled through a partnership approach continuing to invest in opportunities across the County and capitalising on strengths including Durham City and Hitachi locating at Newton Aycliffe, aligning activity and leveraging private sector investment, to deliver the aims and objectives outlined in this Statement, to tackle the key issues facing the county. By building on and investing in our major assets, alongside complementary interventions this will release the county's potential for growth and connect areas of growth with deprived areas in need of regeneration. By following a phased approach across the county, utilising these opportunities we will be able to deliver the greatest impact for each locality and the whole of the county, using the resources available for the best effect. Through a partnership approach we will:
- Lift the constraints on development and stimulate investment in the economic infrastructure needed to increase economic activity and wealth.
 - Capitalise on Durham City's business and tourism potential to drive forward economic growth for County Durham.
 - Invest in our major towns, continuing with the 'whole town' approach.
 - Drive forward the delivery of new homes with the right mix of services to support growth aspirations.
 - Improve the range of choice and standard of existing public and private housing.
 - Invest in our human capital as a direct contributor to growth.
 - Address the needs of our most vulnerable residents, mitigating the impact of welfare reform.

Current position and Regeneration Statement Review

- 6 It is important the Regeneration Statement continues to set the economic and regeneration narrative for the county. Illustrating the vision, ambitions, objectives of where we want to be and what impact we expect to make. Through an integrated approach as partners we can capitalise on our strengths, make the most of our assets to lever investment and tackle key issues facing the county.
- 7 From an economic and funding perspective, along with new regional structures, there have been significant changes over the last three years. Regional priorities are now set out within the North East Strategic Economic Plan managed via the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and North East Combined Authority and at the local level within the refreshed County Durham Sustainable Communities Strategy. Although the national and local economy is beginning to recover, in County Durham we have challenging times ahead and significant economic performance gaps to narrow. Much of the available resources are opportunity led such as Local Growth Funding which is operated at a regional level. EU Structural Funding is also endorsed regionally through the North East ESIF Sub Committee and as well as investment planning being coordinated through the North East Combined Authority. The current Regeneration Statement does not recognise these changes.

- 8 To drive forward our economic ambitions it is important that County Durham continues to reflect its regeneration and economic development priorities and that these are succinctly articulated. The current Regeneration Statement is dated, and does not accurately identify our priority investments across the county that deliver against our measures of success. Through a partnership approach the review will consider and refresh the Statement to ensure that the partnership has an evidenced based and clearly articulated growth ambitions that promote a shared vision.
- 9 Initial discussions have been undertaken with partners to inform the direction and scope of the review. This has involved a Working Group Chairs meeting held in September 2015 and conversations with Durham County Council. The initial key messages are:
- Need a positive, succinct and shorter Statement
 - Established and recognised at the local level – has a variety of uses and purposes, but need to strengthen its influence and outward looking messages
 - Should continue to provide a vision and ambitions for the county – setting the direction for the partnership, but need to strengthen its economic narrative, expected measures of success and objectives.
 - Existing five measures of success should be embedded within the Statement and form objectives that drive priorities and activity. Should consider wide supporting measures and impact required.
 - It needs to continue to set the direction for the CDEP and provide the narrative for the County Durham Plan and other partnership strategies and plans
 - Recognise the value of the existing five ambitions of Thriving Durham City, Vibrant and Successful Towns, Competitive and Successful People, Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Rural Communities and Top Location for Business, however need to ensure their fit is reviewed and place more emphasis upon measurable objectives.
 - Stronger role for transport and infrastructure
 - Need to be clear about priority actions, investment and expected performance of the partnership

Next Steps and Timescales

- 10 In order to build on the initial informal consultation with partners, outline scope and direction of the review, indicative milestones and timescales have been agreed with County Durham Economic Partnership Board in November 2015. Further partnership workshops will be held in early 2016 to review targets, vision and key economic messages. An outline Statement will be discussed with the CDEP Board in February 2016. The development of the review and refreshed Regeneration Statement is being championed through Working Group Chairs. A draft Statement will be completed in the next financial year and agreed through the CDEP Board.

Recommendation

- 11 That the members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress of the Regeneration Statement.

Background papers:

The County Durham Regeneration Statement 2012-2022.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

None

Staffing

None

Risk

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Human Rights

None

Consultation

None

Procurement

None

Disability Issues

None

Legal Implications

None