

**A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY STRATEGY FOR
HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

(Report by Head of Policy and Strategic Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an opportunity for the Panel to comment on the draft Sustainable Local Economy Strategy (SLES) before it is considered by the Cabinet and partner organisations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The development of the Strategy comes at an important time amid a number of national and regional policy initiatives. Specifically, it coincides with the review of the East of England Regional Economic Strategy and the Sub-national review of Economic Development and Regeneration. There is a move to bring together regional spatial and economic policies. It is important, therefore, that there is a clear and unified vision for the development of Huntingdonshire's economy and how it compliments the (sub-) regional economy and the national picture.
- 2.2 An important principle adopted in the development of a new Strategy was to ensure that, as far as possible, it was linked to and mutually supportive of both the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). Time has been taken also to both influence and reflect objectives in other partnership approaches under development where they impact on the local economy, for example the Environment, Culture and Leisure and Housing strategies.
- 2.3 The review of the strategy commenced last September with a series of consultation events and analysis as summarised below.

Activity	Purpose
Regional and sub-regional analysis.	To identify regional and sub-regional priorities and plans.
Employment/ business sector analysis.	To establish GDP sector forecasts and future trends.
Local economy analysis	In conjunction the Economic Forum* to identify business needs
Employment land review	A joint exercise to establish spatial needs for the LDF and SLES.
Assessment of local skills and future requirements	Skills need assessment undertaken by the Huntingdonshire Learning Partnership.

Consultation with Business Community	The Business Forums were used to canvass wider views on priorities for interventions and investment.
Consolidation and interpretation of research/assessments/consultation.	Development of economic interventions/investments and formulation of strategy.
Consultation with individual partners and the Economic Forum	To gain endorsement of proposed economic interventions and strategy.

- 2.4 The draft Strategy sets out a long term (15 year or so) vision for sustainable economic growth in the district in line with the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire and is designed to provide a medium term (3 to 5 year) focus for investment and interventions for a range of organisations working in the district for continued economic success.

3. DELIVERY OF STRATEGY

- 3.1 Individual partners are being invited to comment and support the draft Strategy so that it can be developed as a partnership approach. This will allow the formulation of a joint action plan to help coordinate work being undertaken or planned in the district and ensure it fits with other strategic approaches. Key elements of the Strategy will be taken forward through other means, including the Local Development Framework, Local Transport Plan and the Environmental Action Plan. Activities which can only be achieved through partnership and are considered to be of sufficient importance will be considered as part of the development of the SCS. Subject to broad agreement on the approaches set out in the draft Strategy, it is envisaged that the joint action plan will be developed from January 2008 for implementation from April 2008 onwards.
- 3.2 The Economic Forum will be responsible for overseeing the achievement of the Strategy, while individual organisations will be responsible for the delivery and performance management of specific activities or projects. Progress will be monitored regularly and the delivery plan will be reviewed annually to reflect achievement, changing needs and opportunities. The achievement of the Strategy and its contribution to the achievement of the SCS will be subject to scrutiny arrangements.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Panel are invited to comment on the draft Sustainable Local Economy Strategy prior to its consideration by Cabinet and partner organisations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

EEDA Regional Economic Strategy
Local Economy Strategy 2002 to 2007
Draft Sustainable Community Strategy

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***Note:** The Economic Forum is a thematic partnership within the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership comprising representatives of the public services with responsibility for promoting economic development and regeneration – Huntingdonshire District Council, Town and Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, Job Centre Plus; Businesses representative organisations – Federation of small Businesses, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Chamber of Commerce, Huntingdonshire Business Network, National Farmers Union; individual businesses such as Huntingdon Life Sciences, Luminous. The Forum engages also with the following partners/organisations as necessary - Greater Cambridge Economic Partnership, Greater Peterborough Economic Partnership, East of England International, East of England Development Agency.