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## DRAFT REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The East of England Development Agency (EEDA) has published a draft Regional Economic Strategy for the region, entitled 'Progressing a Shared Vision'. This report summarises the report and seeks Members' views on the proposals.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 EEDA is one of nine English regional development agencies set up in 1998 to help deliver long term sustainable economic growth.
- 2.2 The draft economic strategy has been prepared by EEDA along with a number of partners including the East of England Regional Assembly. Consultation responses are sought by 30 July 2004.
- 2.3 The draft strategy poses a series of questions and these are listed and commented upon in the report. A copy of the report has been placed in the Members' Library.

### 3 THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The long-term vision for the region is:-
- "a leading economy, founded on our world-class knowledge base and the creativity and enterprise of our people, in order to improve the quality of life of all who live and work here."
- 3.2 This vision is supported by four strategic themes:
- building on our strengths
  - capitalising on distinctive opportunities and challenges
  - embedding underlying principles
  - improving on areas of average or poor performance.
- 3.3 The strategy in turn is given expression in eight goals and associated priorities and actions. These are summarised in appendix one to this report.
- 3.4 Part Three of the document deals with the delivery of the strategy and lists detailed actions for each priority. The final version will also include details of the local organisation and partners expected to deliver each agreed action.

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**4 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

- 4.1 The first set of questions in the strategy document deal with the vision and goals.

**Q1** In terms of building on our strengths, are there any assets of international quality and significance that need to be given greater prominence in the final strategy?

No, the report mentions the key assets, including Stansted, The Thames Gateway ports etc.

**Q2** In terms of areas of average and poor performance, are there any additional areas that need to be highlighted? If so, how should these be developed in the final strategy?

The report highlights: skills and human capital; enterprise and productivity; and deprivation and social exclusion. These seem to cover the key areas of concern.

**Q3** Can the strategy articulate more clearly how the East of England should manage and benefit from our proximity to London?

The comments about London are brief indeed in this section, but there is no mention to the critical role to be played by the Thames Gateway.

**Q.4** Are the underlying principles (sustainable development, urban renaissance, rural vitality, equality and diversity, regional leadership and coherence) dealt with adequately in the goals, priorities and actions? If not, how could this be improved?

Yes

**Q5** Overall, has the right set of goals, priorities and actions been identified and do they address all the areas that are needed to achieve the vision?

The draft strategy is a considerable step forward. It is however extremely ambitious with eight major goals and numerous priorities. There must be concern about the ability of EEDA, albeit with the help of partners, to deliver such an ambitious plan.

**Q6 – Q13** Ask if the right set of priorities and actions have been identified for this goal and do they address all the areas that are needed to achieve this visions?

Priorities and actions have been identified for the eight goals (see Appendix 1 to this report) and they do appear to address all the areas that are needed to achieve the vision.

As already stated above, the strategy is ambitious and there is a long list of priorities identified for each goal. To add to the list of priorities is not considered to be appropriate if there is to be any realistic chance of achieving some or all of the goals in whole or at least in part.

- 4.2 The remaining questions in the consultation document consider the arrangements for the delivery of the strategy. The implementation of the strategy can only be achieved with the assistance of partners, but at this stage EEDA has given no indication of the lead organisations and delivery partners that would take responsibility for the delivery of each priority, preferring instead to rely on comments received during the consultation exercise.
- 4.3 This is considered to be a significant omission. Whilst local organisations will no doubt be identified in due course, at this consultation stage EEDA should really have provided an indication of their thinking.

**Q14** Are the spatial implications of the strategy examined in the right way, both in the eight strategic goals and in the delivering in the sub-regions section?

The key area of interest for Rochford is Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE). Subject to the formal comments from the Partnership, the summary of the aims of TGSE and the areas for development seem to be fairly articulated.

**Q15** How can the strategy be best delivered at sub-regional and local level?

The key to delivery of the strategy in TGSE will be the role played by the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership. Without TGSE it is unlikely that any substantial regeneration programme can be delivered.

**Q16** Does the strategy say enough about the role of the region within a UK, European and international context?

Yes

**Q17** How can the institutional framework and partnership working in the region be further developed to improve the delivery and co-ordination of the strategy?

From the perspective of Rochford and South Essex, the key, as has been stated, is the role of the TGSE.

**Q18** Are there any major areas of inconsistency between the draft regional economic strategy and other national or regional strategies and, if so, how can these been reconciled?

It is interesting to note that Local Government seems to be absent from the list of key regional stakeholders groups.

**Q19** Who do you think are the most appropriate organisations or partnerships to lead on each of the goals and who are the most important delivery partners for each priority?

In South Essex it should be the constituent local authorities and TGSE.

**Q20 and 21** Which of the goals, associated priorities and actions outlined in this strategy are most relevant for your organisation to be involved in delivery and how will you contribute?

The Authority's involvement will largely be through TGSE.

**Q22** Are there any 'big ideas' for the East of England that have been omitted from this document, or priorities that should have a greater prominence?

None at this stage.

## **5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Strategic Risk**

It is difficult to accurately assess the risk implications for Rochford arising from this draft strategy. Ownership and delivery of the strategy is not intended to be vested in EEDA, but with the various partner organisations that will be identified as lead and supporting delivery organisations. That being the case, Rochford will play a part in the delivery of the strategy in so far as it impacts upon South Essex. There is then a strategic risk associated with not being able to achieve delivery in a way that reflects the need to see significant regeneration across the South Essex.

## **6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The draft strategy recognises the importance of an attractive environment as a key driver contributing to the regeneration of the region.

## **7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There is little doubt that significant resources will need to be identified if the vision for the East of England is to become a reality. It is not clear if there will be financial implications for Rochford at this stage.

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**8 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 It is proposed that, subject to comments from Members, the Committee **RESOLVES** that the comments in this report be sent to the East of England Development Agency in response to the consultation document 'Progressing a Shared Vision'.

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**Background Papers:**

Progressing a Shared Vision – Draft Economic Strategy for the East of England.

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## Appendix 1

Goals	Priorities
<b>ONE</b> a skills base that can support a world-class economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increasing employment rates in specific communities</li> <li>• supporting young people and their career choices</li> <li>• developing skills that meet business needs</li> <li>• developing higher education to support the knowledge economy.</li> </ul>
<b>TWO</b> growing competitiveness, productivity and entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reinforcing and building upon the existing entrepreneurial culture</li> <li>• providing a coherent and integrated business support service</li> <li>• supporting the accelerated and sustainable growth, productivity and competitiveness of the region's business</li> <li>• developing the capacity of the region to engage in global markets and improving the level and quality of foreign investment into the region</li> <li>• ensuring business development adds value and vitality to local communities</li> </ul>
<b>THREE</b> global leadership in developing and realising innovation in science, technology and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouraging commercial exploitation of the region's research base</li> <li>• ensuring strong links between regional universities, research institutes, and the private sector</li> <li>• maintaining and building upon the quality of research establishments in the region</li> <li>• facilitating international partnerships that enable knowledge and technology transfer</li> <li>• making full use of the research assets and global reputation of Cambridge to achieve benefits for the region</li> </ul>

Goals	Priorities
<b>FOUR</b> <b>high quality places to work and live</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring a suitable supply of homes to support economic growth</li> <li>ensuring the provision of social and transport infrastructure to make communities sustainable</li> <li>ensuring a high quality supply of business land and premises</li> <li>developing green infrastructure to support economic growth</li> <li>enabling renaissance and regeneration of the region's communities</li> <li>developing and supporting local mechanisms for implementation and delivery</li> </ul>
<b>FIVE</b> <b>social inclusion and broad participation in the regional economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supporting people and communities to achieve their potential</li> <li>creating sustainable employment opportunities accessible to disadvantaged communities and groups</li> <li>promoting access to work and improving conditions of work</li> <li>providing access to essential services</li> <li>tackling discrimination experienced by communities or individuals in the region wherever they are found</li> </ul>
<b>SIX</b> <b>making the most from the development of international gateways and national and regional transport corridors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>taking advantage of the opportunities from airport expansion in the region</li> <li>making the most of our gateways to the sea</li> <li>promoting the delivery of strategic road, rail, and other public transport priorities for the region</li> <li>ensuring that transport solutions serve economic growth in a sustainable manner</li> <li>understanding the importance of addressing the importance of transport links with London</li> </ul>
<b>SEVEN</b> <b>a leading information society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring that the capacity and coverage of our data communications infrastructure keeps pace with the needs of a knowledge economy</li> <li>promoting the use of network based technologies among businesses, organisations and individuals in the region</li> <li>supporting growth in the supply of network based technologies and the development of digital content</li> <li>improving the skills and ability of individuals to make effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT)</li> </ul>

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Goals	Priorities
<b>EIGHT</b> an exemplar in environmental technologies and the efficient use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• capturing the advantages of renewable energy production in the region</li><li>• promoting resource efficiency and environmental good practice</li><li>• supporting the development of environmental goods and services businesses</li><li>• developing the region as an environmental exemplar</li></ul>