

Report for Resolution

Report to Executive
25 June 2008

Report of Director - Regeneration and Development

Subject Norwich Research Park and EEDA Funding

Supplementary
Agenda Item
To be considered subject to
the Chair's approval.

Purpose

This report seeks Executive approval to send a letter to East of England Development Agency (EEDA) endorsing the Council's support for projects at Norwich Research Park. The development at Norwich Research Park is critical to economic growth and development in the City and consistent with the priorities of the Integrated Development Programme and Local Strategic Partnership.

Recommendations

That Executive agrees to send a letter to East of England Development Agency, with a copy to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, as set out in paragraph 4, below.

Financial Consequences

None

Strategic Objective

The report helps to achieve the corporate objective to build a successful economic future for Norwich and secure sustainable growth.

Executive Member: Cllr Morrey

Ward: University

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

Greater Norwich Development Partnership- Integrated Development Programme- April 2008

City of Norwich Partnership- A new Vision for Norwich- The Sustainable Community Strategy 2007- 2020

Report on IDP- Executive 26 March 2008

Report

Norwich Research Park and EEDA Funding

1. The Integrated Development Programme (IDP) was submitted to EEDA in April 2008 following approval through the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) and the Council's Executive in March 2008. Projects in Norwich Research Park feature as priorities within the Western Quadrant package in the submitted IDP.
2. At the City of Norwich Partnership (CoNP) Strategic Board Meeting on 17 June, Professors Bill Macmillan (ViceChancellor) and Trevor Davies (Pro Vice Chancellor) of the University of East Anglia (UEA) expressed concerns about the 'weighting' that other organisations gave documents such as the Sustainable Communities Strategy and IDP for Greater Norwich when determining funding and considered this could be detrimental to investment from the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) for the UEA and Norwich Research Park. There is a perceived lack of clarity about whether EEDA investment is solely to be determined through the IDP or whether there will be separate funding available as there appears to be evidence that the latter is the case.
3. The Chair of CoNP had previously written to EEDA, following the March Strategic Board, expressing reservations about the IDP process. The reply from EEDA, dated 19 May 2008, and subsequent conversations with EEDA did not allay the UEA's fears that the IDP was a 'bidding tool' and that only projects included in it would be awarded funding. The CoNP Strategic Board felt there needed to be clarity about EEDA's approach to funding to the higher and further education sector. The CoNP Strategic Board proposed that the City Council through its Executive and the Board itself should write to emphasise its support of the Norwich Research Park to EEDA to further clarify the process of decision making and prioritisation around projects originating in Norwich.
4. It is proposed that the City Council writes to EEDA, with a copy to the GNDP, and endorses the statement approved at the CoNP Strategic Board meeting on 17 June 2008, as follows:

'The City of Norwich Partnership would like to emphasise its wholehearted support for the Norwich Research Park. The growth and development of the Norwich Research Park is critical to the future economic success of the City and supports the LSP's top priorities to promote the Norwich Knowledge Economy and is essential to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership's (GNDP) achievement of employment targets and the growth of the City.

Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council have publicly expressed support and we expect EEDA to recognise that. There appears to be continuing confusion about funding for projects in Norwich and it would be helpful if all potential projects came to the GNDP, whether they are funded via the IDP or not.'

5. It is worth also clarifying the process for further development of the IDP. GNDP will be attending an Investment Day with EEDA and other Regional Agencies on 9 July 2008. It would be helpful if EEDA could give some indication of projects that it is likely to support by then and other agencies will be asked to endorse the process of delivering funding through the holistic investment plan approach (IDP).
6. The GNDP is due to consider a report in September 2008 on the way forward for the IDP. To provide an effective tool for coordinating funding, it needs further development so that it becomes a comprehensive, dynamic investment plan for sustainable growth in Greater Norwich. This will allow the GNDP to coordinate all long and short term investment needs for growth and develop the on-going dialogue that is needed with delivery partners, public sector funding agencies, developers and investors.