

West Northamptonshire Joint Local Development Document/ Local Transport Plan Steering Group	
Meeting Date	20 September 2006
Title	Programme Director's Progress Report

1. Recommendations

The Steering Group agree:-

- a) the recruitment of an experienced Project Manager to lead the Joint Planning Team, together with proposals for defined secondments, neutral location, involvement of WNDC, County Council and line management;
- b) the review of Governance arrangements for both the Steering Group and Programme Board in order to build on and strengthen the existing arrangements.

2. Purpose of Report

To summarise progress, activity and key issues not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

3. Report Background

a) Joint Planning Team

Having agreed to pursue Option 1 to develop the Joint Core Strategy, it is crucial that all Councils, Stakeholders and Government have confidence that a credible method of delivery exists.

This matter was discussed at last week's Programme Board, the following are recommended as a way of ensuring a joint team is established to deliver against an agreed plan.

- An experienced Project Manager be appointed to lead the team, drive forward activities to ensure timely achievement of key milestones. The individual to have a good understanding of the development process and working in a political environment at a senior level.
- The Project Manager to be accountable to the Programme Board and, in turn, the Steering Group.
- A Joint Core Team to be established with defined secondments from each of the Plan Making Councils.

- The Joint Team to establish its own identity and, preferably, located in a “neutral” location whilst being conveniently located to the constituent authorities and stakeholders.
- WNDC and Northamptonshire County Council are invited to second resources into the Joint Core Team.
- The Project Manager to be “line managed” by Northampton Borough Council’s Corporate Director.
- Any resource implications of the above to be shared proportionally between the participating organisations.

b) Governance

In addition to developing a robust Project Plan and Project Management arrangements, it is essential to have effective Governance arrangements. The foundations are in place through the operation of the Programme Board and Steering Group. However, given the imperative to maintain good progress against plan and ongoing need to ensure it is fit for purpose within a wider policy context, it is proposed to revisit the arrangements for both the Steering Group and Programme Board.

In particular, the following are suggested as means of strengthening the current arrangements:-

- Nominated members from each of the Plan Making Authorities have specific delegated authorities from their Council to agree all matters not reserved for Cabinet or Council decisions.
- Attendees at Programme Board have leadership and managerial authority within their organisations to resolve issues identified at the Programme Board.

c) Communications and Resource Plans

As the Project moves forward, effective and timely communications, both within constituent organisations and with the wider communities is crucial.

The Programme Board has already agreed the need for a Communication Plan for the project. Work has already begun in drafting a Plan. The completion of this draft will be a priority as soon as there is an agreed and detailed Project Plan for the Project with key milestones identified. Similarly, the Resource Plan cannot be completed until the Project Plan has been agreed.