1. **Purpose of Report**

   The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Committee on the local economic and regeneration strategy for North Lanarkshire, entitled Our Plan for Growth.

2. **Background**

   2.1 The economic recession that has affected the UK, Scottish and North Lanarkshire economies has resulted in a number of challenges for the local authority and its partners to face. To date, the Council’s policy towards addressing these challenges has been articulated through the Regeneration Statement 2008-12, which identified the main regeneration issues facing the council and how these would be addressed. With the Regeneration Statement coming to an end in 2012, it was proposed that a new economic strategy would be produced.

3. **Consultation process**

   3.1 Developing a strategy required consultation with stakeholders and partners and this has taken place since December 2012. These discussions with partners were based on the consultation document that was approved by Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2012. The document identified three priorities for regenerating and growing the local economy and partners were asked the extent to whether or not they agreed with these priorities and, perhaps more importantly, how best the Council and its partners should go about addressing each priority.

   3.2 To date, consultation has taken place with members of the Council’s Corporate Management Team, and senior Council officers, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Development International, Skills Development Scotland, Routes to Work, North Lanarkshire Leisure and a number of other partners and agencies.

   3.3 Conversations have also taken place with local and regional MSPs, Westminster MPs and elected members to seek their views on what the key challenges are and how to respond to them.

4. **Developing the Strategy**

   4.1 The current draft of the strategy (which is attached as an annex to this report) is the product of the consultation meetings and discussions. Three priorities have been agreed:

   i. Supporting businesses, developing our infrastructure and attracting investment
   ii. Increasing employment and improving the skills of our workforce
   iii. Regenerating our town centres and communities.
4.2 The strategy document articulates a number of actions that the Council and its partners will take forward to address these priorities. These actions will form an internal action plan which will be reviewed at the mid point of the strategy's lifetime, which would be around summer 2014. The success of the strategy would therefore be dependent on the progress made against each of the actions, rather than a list of indicators and targets that can be influenced by several competing factors.

4.3 The current draft of the strategy will now be sent to consultees and other partners for comments. Focus group meetings will be held with relevant partners to discuss the action plan that has been developed and their role in delivering the strategy. It is anticipated that after these meetings there may be changes to the action plan to include additional intervention aimed at addressing the identified priorities.

5. Conclusion

5.1 In conclusion, the strategy as outlined (the 3 priorities as detailed in the document) has been widely consulted on and we would seek approval for that part of the plan. In the final round of consultation on the strategy we expect that there will be additional actions that should be included. We have issued this draft of the document to relevant organisations, council services, MPs and MSPs with a view to publishing the new strategy in June 2013. PDF copies will be emailed to all Councillors and hard copies will be left in the Members' library. We now seek final comments.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that Committee:

i) Approves the local economic and regeneration strategy for June 2013 publication;

ii) Approves further amendments and changes to the action plan part of the document;

iii) Otherwise, notes the contents of the report.

Paul Jukes
Executive Director of Environmental Services

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information please contact Stuart MacMillan on 01698 302 814.
Our Plan for Growth
North Lanarkshire’s Local Economic and Regeneration Strategy 2013 – 2016

19/April/2013
Draft 1
Stuart MacMillan
Introduction from the Convenor of Regeneration and Chair of the North Lanarkshire Business Partnership

Welcome to Our Plan for Growth, the local economic and regeneration strategy for North Lanarkshire. The strategy sets out the North Lanarkshire Partnership’s priorities for growing the local economy over the next three years and explains how we will go about achieving them. We believe that, at a time of significant global, national and local economic turmoil there is a need to articulate our response to the challenges facing the people of North Lanarkshire.

Despite these challenges, the Partnership remains ambitious about what we can achieve. Our vision for this strategy articulates our aspirations for North Lanarkshire as a place where people and businesses want to live, work, visit and invest.

North Lanarkshire has a first class economic infrastructure that will leave the area in a strong position when the UK and Scottish economies return to economic growth. However, there are a number of actions that our Partnership can take to ensure that growth in national economies feeds through to North Lanarkshire and benefits our residents, businesses and communities. Our Plan for Growth has identified three priorities:

- supporting businesses, developing our infrastructure and attracting investment;
- increasing employment and improving the skills of our workforce; and,
- regenerating our town centres and communities.

Put simply, we need to increase the demand for labour by attracting investment, growing the business base and increasing the level of jobs. Equally, we need to improve the supply of labour by investing in the skills of our workforce, our people and communities to meet this demand.

Our Plan for Growth has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and partners. We have sought the views of Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Development International, Skills Development Scotland, Scotrail/First Group, the voluntary sector and other partners. We have established a Business Partnership, comprising of 20 local employers which has had a key role in developing the strategy and will have an equally important role in delivering it. We have opened up a conversation with local MPs and MSPs and consulted our elected members on how best to grow and generate the local area.

We are committed to maintaining dialogue with all of our partners on how best we can implement Our Plan for Growth and grow the local economy. By working better together we can achieve much more for North Lanarkshire.

Councillor David Fagan

Convenor of Regeneration and Chair of the North Lanarkshire Business Partnership
Our Vision for North Lanarkshire

Despite the current economic problems that the North Lanarkshire, Scottish and UK economies are facing, the Partnership has a long term vision for the area. This vision will guide interventions and activities designed to address the economic priorities outlined in this document.

Our vision for North Lanarkshire is a place that

- Supports businesses to start, develop and grow resulting in more new businesses in the area and a higher rate of businesses sustaining for over a year
- Attracts investment across all sectors leading to a rise in the number of high value jobs and a more diverse economy
- Provides first class education and opportunity for our young people to develop skills they need for employment, witnessed by high youth employment and greater educational attainment
- Enables our residents to achieve their potential by supporting them with training and employment opportunities leading to more people in work and higher average wages
- Supports our town centres to attract investment and footfall and become central community spaces that offer a variety of retail, leisure, housing, business and social activities
- Protects our most vulnerable residents, giving them the high quality care and support they need
Strategic Context

Our Plan for Growth has been produced by North Lanarkshire Council on behalf of the North Lanarkshire Partnership and the North Lanarkshire Business Partnership. It identifies the main priorities for growing the North Lanarkshire economy over the next three years and how the Partnership will work towards achieving them. The strategy complements and reinforces the approach outlined in the Single Outcome Agreement / Community Plan but has a narrower focus in identifying what the Partnership can do to grow the local economy.

It is important that Our Plan for Growth recognises the principles and ambitions of the major national and regional economic and regeneration strategies. A number of these are detailed in the diagram below. Each of these strategies have influenced and provided direction for Our Plan for Growth.
North Lanarkshire and its local economic infrastructure

North Lanarkshire is located in the centre of Scotland, 15km from Glasgow and 38km from Edinburgh. This location provides a competitive advantage over other areas given the proximity to the economic centres of Glasgow and Edinburgh and also the access to markets and trading opportunities that the road and rail infrastructure in the area brings.

The map on this page shows the economic infrastructure of the area, with its various business parks and industrial estates, road and rail routes, three college campuses and major tourism sites.

The proposed A8 upgrade and freight terminal are Gartsherrie are two major transport improvements that will bring significant economic benefits to the area.
Supporting businesses, developing our infrastructure and attracting investment

A vibrant, growing and sustainable business sector is crucial to the future of the North Lanarkshire economy. The increase in the number of businesses in the area over the last ten years has been a major driver in the growth and diversification of the local economy, bringing both jobs and wealth with it. Supporting our businesses to start up, develop and grow will be a key element of our activity over the next three years.

The North Lanarkshire economy has undergone significant change in recent times, with growth in financial and business sectors as traditional industries have scaled back due to changing economic circumstances. This change is expected to continue, albeit at a slower pace. As the UK and Scottish economies rebalance and readjust in the wake of the economic recession, North Lanarkshire will have to position itself to take advantage of growth in sectors that are large employers in the area and any new sectors that are forecast to expand.

To support our vision and this priority, we will need to work hard to ensure that we create the right conditions for businesses to start up and prosper and attract new businesses and investment to the area. Over the years, we have been successful in reducing the amount of vacant and derelict land to create sites that are ready for development and private sector investment. This will continue to be a focus of our activity. Providing the right mix of industrial and commercial property will be the main focus of Fusion Assets, the arms length regeneration company of North Lanarkshire Council. Together, these measures will help to create the appropriate infrastructure for developing the business environment in the area.

North Lanarkshire's location in the heart of Scotland between the two economic centres of Glasgow and Edinburgh provides a competitive advantage for accessing markets and business opportunities. A number of business parks have located in North Lanarkshire because of these reasons, and we will continue to support their development and help attract investment to these sites.

Our transport infrastructure is crucial to the successful movement of goods, services and labour. North Lanarkshire sees the largest amount of freight movement in Scotland and this has resulted in the distribution, warehousing and logistics sectors becoming a large employer in the area. Maintaining and investing in our road infrastructure asset will therefore continue to support trade through and within North Lanarkshire. Connecting people with jobs through
the development of our rail and bus services will also be a focus of our activity and we will work with SPT, FirstGroup/Scotrail, Network Rail and Transport Scotland to improve public transport in North Lanarkshire.

Investment in North Lanarkshire also comes from tourism related activity and visits to the area’s sites and attractions. We will work with South Lanarkshire Council to develop the Lanarkshire tourism offer and aim to attract more visitors and visitor spend in the area. Major events such as the Commonwealth Games in 2014 will see some of our key sport and leisure sites such as Strathclyde Park and Ravenscraig Sports Facility being used to support athletes and teams.

How we will achieve our vision and this priority

- Support 600 business start ups every year to 2016
- Provide support to a further 900 existing businesses to help them develop and grow
- Implement an action plan to develop and grow the social enterprise sector
- Review our programmes of support to businesses to ensure that businesses in their important second and third years can access assistance to help sustain them
- Support businesses with information and advice programmes on how to access public sector procurement
- Review our industrial and commercial business sites to ensure we have the appropriate infrastructure for businesses
- Work with Scottish Government to improve access to Next Generation Broadband for businesses and communities
- Through Fusion Assets, work in partnership with the private sector to bring commercial and industrial opportunities to market and increase and improve business property sites
- Invest in regeneration of vacant and derelict land and lobby Scottish Government for the continuation of the Vacant and Derelict Fund at current funding levels
- Develop an inward investment plan that will be proactive and competitive for attracting new business to the area
- Work with the Glasgow Economic Commission to develop a Life Sciences corridor that will benefit the wider region
• Work with Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International to support the growth of the Enterprise’s key sectors in North Lanarkshire and assist businesses to exports good and services out with Scotland

• Invest in our roads and transport infrastructure to ensure the efficient and effective movement of goods, services and labour

• Work with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and ScotRail to improve public transport to our key employment sites

• Develop Park and Ride facilities at key transport hubs

• Work in partnership with ScotRail to increase the number of Services between Cumbernauld and Glasgow on the EGIP line and between Cumbernauld and Motherwell and bring improvements to Motherwell train station

• In partnership with South Lanarkshire Council, we will take forward and implement the Lanarkshire Tourism Strategy and aim to improve the tourism offer to visitors and businesses.
Increasing employment and improving the skills of our workforce

The success of North Lanarkshire will in large part be determined by the productivity and output of our workforce. Investing in skills and training to improve the qualification levels and capabilities of the workforce is therefore a key priority in order to ensure the long term success of the area and attract investment. A high quality education infrastructure through our schools and colleges will be crucial to delivering this priority.

We will provide a first class education and training system in our schools to support young people achieve a positive destination when leaving school. We will help prepare our young people for the workplace through vocational training linked to growth sectors and large employing sectors in the surrounding area. Underpinning this will be our high quality education institutions which will be crucial to delivering this priority and we will continue to redevelop, refurbish and build learning places fit for 21st century education.

The economic recession is a major risk to the area, as unemployment and worklessness have increased significantly. One particular casualty of the recession has been the increase in youth unemployment: having young people experiencing long periods of unemployment can create a number of social and economic costs to both young people and the North Lanarkshire economy. Tackling unemployment requires direct intervention and we will continue to create employment opportunities in local companies for our workless residents to take advantage of. However, we must also take a long term view and improve our support structure that creates a more resilient and flexible workforce that can respond to changes in the economic landscape. As the economy continues to diversify, our workforce will need to adapt to support the demand created by changing employment patterns.

The college network in North Lanarkshire has a vital role in providing the workforce and learners with a curriculum that is relevant to the economic and national needs of the area, which can also be responsive, flexible and dynamic. The quality of the campuses in the Lanarkshire region is a major benefit to the area’s learners.

Engaging with local businesses in a coordinated way to understand their workforce planning needs and assisting them with employment solutions through a variety of employment focussed programmes will continue to be an important factor in linking learning with businesses and enterprise.
How we will achieve our vision and this priority

- Implement our education policy Raising Achievement for All which sets out our vision to provide the highest quality education resources for our children, young people and adults
- Implement phase 2 of Schools and Centres 21 which will see a number of schools, nurseries and educational centres refurbished and redeveloped to be fit for 21st century learning
- Provide tailored support through the Opportunities for All programme for young people who are in danger of entering the adult world without a positive transition
- Continue to provide modern apprentice opportunities for young people in a wide range of jobs
- Encourage enterprise and entrepreneurship in our schools through a variety of programmes and projects and such as Curriculum for Excellence and Dragon’s Lair
- Remove the barriers to employment, education, training and learning for our children, young people and adults
- Bolster the resilience of our workforce by encouraging individuals to achieve higher level qualifications in their fields of expertise and interest
- North Lanarkshire’s Working will achieve its three year target of supporting 5,000 workless residents into jobs
- Continue to support unemployed residents with special needs through our Supported Employment programme
- Increase private and third sector engagement with schools, linking schools with local employers to better connect school curriculum with employer need and demand
- Continue to analyse economic trends to ensure our school and college curricula are relevant to current and future labour markets. We will also link more effectively our large employing sectors with education and employability programmes
- Implement Community Benefit in Procurement contracts to all the major Council tendered projects to ensure that local individuals and businesses can benefit directly from procurement spend
- Deliver the Regional Outcome Agreement for Lanarkshire’s colleges and provide the best possible learning experiences, outcomes and opportunities for local students
Regenerating our town centres and communities

Town centres and local high streets play an important part in the economic and social well being of North Lanarkshire. There are seven towns in North Lanarkshire along with Ravenscraig and each are the focus of many activities including shopping and retail, entertainment and business services. The overall vibrancy and attractiveness of our town centres will in large part be down to the quality of the retail, leisure and business premises mix.

Over recent years, town centres across the UK have struggled to adapt to the changing face of consumer demand and expenditure patterns, with more and more people favouring online shopping and out of town shopping centres. We will support our town centres in responding to these changes. We will look to attract businesses, leisure and town centre living which together will help revitalise our town centres. Keeping our town centres safe and attractive will be important factors in achieving this.

Investing in our communities is about addressing social, economic and environmental issues that stand in the way of successful community regeneration and development. A number of our communities have yet to fully recover from industrial change after the closure of steelworks and heavy industry that many communities relied on as sources of employment. In some cases this has resulted in pockets of deprivation with areas suffering from low employment levels and poor health. In addition to this, the welfare reforms being pursued by the current Government will have major impacts on some of our most disadvantaged individuals and communities.

The Partnership will support communities that face disadvantage. Providing good quality affordable housing, access to employment and training opportunities, improving the physical infrastructure and making communities and places more attractive will help build sustainable communities and improve people’s quality of life. Promoting healthy lifestyles and encouraging physical activity will help reduce poor health, obesity and socioeconomic issues related to poor health.
How we will achieve our vision and this priority

- We will develop a Town Centre Action Plan for each of our town centres that will outline the strategic direction and policy for each town centre. We will also consider the Scottish Government’s review of town centres when it is published in 2013
- Continue to progress the regeneration of Ravenscraig and the creation of a new town centre on the site
- Proactively support the development of housing in our town centres
- Over the next three years we will invest £5million aimed at making our towns more attractive and accessible
- Where possible, we will locate local and community services in town centres similar to what has been achieved in Coatbridge, Airdrie and with Wishaw Hub in order to attract and increase footfall
- Develop a programme of events for our town centres designed to attract shoppers, visitors and retailers and market these events to ensure wide coverage
- Ensure the safety of our town centres by upgrading CCTV coverage
- Explore the creation of free wi-fi zones in town centre areas
- Deliver the Building for the Future Programme which will see £150million of investment and 1,000 homes built over 10 years
- Support the demolition and re-provisioning of the Cumbernauld multi-storey blocks
- Establish an Energy Partnership Vehicle which will be responsible for securing funding, providing energy advice and delivering a range of energy improvement works
- Provide a bottom up approach to regeneration through the Local Development Programme to provide funding for community-led regeneration projects
- Monitor the impact of welfare reform on our residents and develop targeted support measures to help those most severely affected
- Improve the health and sport and leisure activity of the local population through North Lanarkshire Leisure, which will help improve the productivity of the workforce and support the growth in demand for leisure activity