

Executive Summary

Leicester City Growth. Your City. Your Choice

1.0 Why is Leicester special?

Leicester is full of opportunities. Some of the UK's most successful businesses are located in Leicester. Two world-class universities are based within the city and a third is just outside. The people of Leicester demonstrate greater innovation, creativity and entrepreneurialism than other parts of the UK. The city's young and ethnically diverse population cultivates these traits and has contributed to the strong rate of business formation. Yet there still remain high levels of deprivation across many of the city's wards. Unemployment in many areas is stubbornly high and earnings for employees and residents within the city are significantly below the national average.

1.1 Why City Growth?

City Growth tackles the problems of unemployment and poverty in deprived inner-city areas by recognizing the potential for enterprise and creativity that resides in all individuals and in the companies already successfully trading in the city. It seeks to help successful businesses grow faster thus creating more wealth and sustainable new jobs. In so doing, it opens up new market opportunities for enterprise and entrepreneurship for young and old alike across all our communities. To achieve this City Growth focuses on cluster-led initiatives to create wealth and social prosperity particularly on the inner-city deprived neighbourhoods. However, we have also recognised that these wards do not exist in isolation but as part of the overall city economy. Many actions proposed therefore have city-wide connections and potential impact.

1.2 Cluster Focus

City Growth is led by the private sector and concentrates on clusters where there are strong opportunities for growth in Leicester and informal business networks are already established.

Based on research five clusters were identified. Three as established clusters: construction, retail, food and drink: and two as emerging clusters: creative industries and technology. Working with these clusters and supported by the public sector, City Growth has established an evidence base and a framework for action based on widespread discussion with business that will help drive the economy of Leicester forward and which supports other local and regional strategies to improve the economic performance of Leicester.

1.3 The City Growth Vision

The Leicester City Growth Vision is:

To make Leicester a prosperous and vital city by building on the diversity and creative enterprise of its people and business community.

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The mission of City Growth is to help bring about the freedoms, the relationships and actions needed for the vision to be realised. Much has already been done and is being done, but City Growth, with its private sector focus, offers a new approach to tackling the economic problems of the city.

Building on the diversity of Leicester and the aspirations of its communities; creating new opportunities for growth and success; capitalising on the successful clusters already established; and nurturing community cohesion; are all fundamental to the long-term success of City Growth.

Growing successful companies will help stimulate economic activity across local supply chains and create additional wealth and new jobs. Ensuring strategic linkage to the deprived wards of Leicester will start the process of positive change through providing new opportunities and exploiting strengths. It is these concepts that drive our vision.

1.4 The Breakthrough Focus

If the vision for Leicester City Growth is to be achieved then Leicester must become a city of innovation, a city of knowledge, a city with a skilled labour force and a city with a world-class image and reputation for business and culture.

These aspirations are at the heart of the vision. They are reflected in aspirations for each of the clusters and in the actions that business has suggested. Their fulfilment requires individual vision, leadership, creativity and communication. They are underpinned by opportunities arising from the £3 billion public and private investment in Leicester over the next 10 years.

These aspirations translate into a Breakthrough Focus comprising five goals that must be achieved for the City Growth vision to be realised:

- VF1: Vision & Leadership - building a strong private public sector partnership to implement City Growth
- VF2: Demand-led Workforce Development - providing business with the skills it needs
- VF3: Innovation for Success - challenging businesses to grow through innovation
- VF4: Making Connections - strengthening commercial and public resource links
- VF5: Capitalise on £3 billion capital investment - cascading opportunity to local business

These five Vital Few goals drive the individual City Growth programmes of action and in turn the programmes help to achieve the goals and hence the City Growth vision.

1.5 Actions to achieve the vision

Understanding what makes a City such as Leicester successful in a global economy and how its chosen clusters can thrive has been built on the research work by De Montfort University and later by the business

engagement work of Strategem which included interviewing 175 companies and over 100 participating in a complete Strategy Day.

The aspirations for what makes a city successful are encapsulated in the Vital Few goals. In parallel, discussion with Leicester business has captured four cross-cutting themes that cover many of the issues and opportunities raised by companies across each of the clusters. These themes both complement and challenge the Vital Few: actions within them help achieve the Vital Few goals whilst others require public organisations to think laterally and find new innovative ways to deliver service.

1.6 The Cluster Action Teams

Within each of the themes there are a series of individual actions or programmes of action that are owned by the individual clusters through a private sector cluster action team. Each cluster action team is chaired by a cluster champion who represents the cluster on a City Growth Board together with other champions. In turn organisations are designated to lead on each of the Vital Few goals.

The actions for each cluster fall into three broad categories: influencing the market and public sector policy, addressing information failure within the cluster, and direct interventions to achieve specific results.

In addition, there are actions that sit across clusters and which require collaborative action across the clusters within a common theme. Examples include the Leicester's relationship with its universities, inter-cluster trading and the availability of employment land.

...It is only by working together with a shared passion and commitment to plan and to act that the economic potential of the city can be achieved.