

DECISION-MAKER:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE		
SUBJECT:	KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY INQUIRY – FINAL REPORT		
DATE OF DECISION:	17 FEBRUARY 2011		
REPORT OF:	CHAIR OF SCRUTINY PANEL C		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

SUMMARY

At its meeting on 17th June 2010, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee authorised Scrutiny Panel C to undertake an Inquiry into the Knowledge Economy. Scrutiny Panel C has now completed the Inquiry and the final report is attached at Appendix 1 for approval and referral to the Executive.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To receive and consider the report of Scrutiny Panel C;
- (ii) To approve the report and forward it to the Executive for consideration and further action.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In accordance with the Council's constitution, this Committee must receive and approve the final report of a Scrutiny Panel Inquiry and refer it to the Executive for consideration and further action.

CONSULTATION

2. Scrutiny Panel C received evidence from a variety of organisations, individuals and officers from Southampton City Council. A list of witnesses who provided evidence to the Inquiry is shown in Appendix 2 within the attached report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. None

DETAIL

4. On 17th June 2010 this Committee agreed the indicative terms of reference for an Inquiry into the Knowledge Economy. This Committee requested that Scrutiny Panel C conduct the Inquiry and report back their findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
5. The Panel undertook the Inquiry over 4 meetings between July and October 2010 and agreed, at a meeting on 27th January 2011, the 6 recommendations contained within the Inquiry report attached at Appendix 1.

6. This Committee needs to consider whether Scrutiny Panel C has responded adequately to the Inquiry objectives outlined in the Terms of Reference shown in Appendix 1 within the attached report.
7. Evidence gathered throughout the Inquiry led the Scrutiny Panel to conclude that many of the key elements required for a thriving knowledge economy are in place but need joining up, and that a number of projects which would improve the City's offer are already in development. These include:-
 - Delivery of schemes such as the Cultural Quarter, West Quay 3 and the Royal Pier Waterfront; all 3 of which would enhance the perception of the City;
 - The Local Development Framework (including Core Strategy, City Centre Action Plan).
8. The evidence presented to the Scrutiny Panel identified a number of areas where improvements are required to support the development of the knowledge economy. The areas identified by the Scrutiny Panel matched closely with the key priorities for the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) that emerged at the end of the Scrutiny Inquiry.
9. The 6 recommendations agreed by Scrutiny Panel C reflect the key strategic role the Solent LEP will have in driving economic development in Southampton and the need to avoid duplication. If implemented the Scrutiny Panel believe that the recommendations will boost the development of Southampton's knowledge economy thereby strengthening and diversifying the economy of the City.
10. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee procedure rules within the constitution require that within two months of the date that this committee approves a final inquiry report, the Executive will consider the report and submit its findings to either this committee or to Council. If this Committee is therefore minded to accept the final version of the Panel's report, then the document will be forwarded to the Executive for further action.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

11. The recommendations within the appended report could be progressed by re-focussing council officer and partner's time and existing work programmes.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

12. The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Other Legal Implications:

13. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

14. The proposals contained within the appended report are in accordance with the Council's Policy Framework.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1	Knowledge Economy Inquiry - Final report
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Documents In Members' Rooms

	None
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Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the
Access to Information
Procedure Rules / Schedule
12A allowing document to be
Exempt/Confidential (if
applicable)

1.	None	
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Background documents available for inspection at: N/A

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED: Not applicable **KEY DECISION?** No