

**BLSP Economic Regeneration Sub-Group
7 September 2005
3pm – 5pm
Ceres Suite, Town Hall
Workshop**

MINUTES

Attending:

Roger Ranson (Chair)	Bassetlaw District Council (Economic Development)
Cllr Barry Bowles	Bassetlaw District Council
Michael Carnall	Notts Chamber of Commerce
Phil Fone	North Notts College
Russell Slater	Bassetlaw District Council (Economic Development)
Daniel Watson	Bassetlaw District Council (Economic Development)
Joanne Wilson	Bassetlaw District Council (Policy)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Ken Aldred	Nottinghamshire County Council
Sarah Bailey	Nottinghamshire Business Link
Sue Crosby	Nottinghamshire Business Link
Dale Dudley	Job Centre Plus
Geoffrey Hulse	Notts Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Storey	Nottinghamshire County Council

2. Minutes from the last meeting and matters arising

The Minutes were agreed as a true record.

3. Local Area Agreements Update (Roger Ranson)

Following the LSP ER Meeting on 6 July 2005, Nottinghamshire County Council met to discuss shared priorities in particular around the Economic Development & Enterprise Block.

The main themes identified and agreed on:

Economic Activity/Inactivity – looking at specific areas e.g. helping women make the transition from part-time work to full-time work, working with people who wish to be self employed etc.

At present BDC economic activity rates are higher than those of many of the surrounding LAs.

Phil Fone enquired whether this included considering the Eastern European population in terms of skills, jobs and economic activity etc.

RR stated that it does raise issues on how to respond, particularly looking at the jobs that are being created, and will be created locally i.e. B&Q, RHADS etc. And that employers are obviously looking at getting the positions filled as quickly and effectively as possible.

PF highlighted other issues associated with increased numbers of economic migrants i.e. housing, and the economic impact. And that partners and organisations need to be proactive in supporting employers through things such as influencing strategies around housing, education, health etc.

RR stated that he agreed with PF that these issues definitely need to be picked up, especially through the LDF and strategic plan.

Cllr Bowles suggested it may be of use to ask a local employer to talk about their views and experiences of employing foreign workers, and identify what their needs are, and what improvements could be facilitated.

Creating a Climate for Investment – RR reported that the main focus around this was the ‘knowledge economy’ – looking at higher value added opportunities, quality jobs etc. To facilitate this it may need LA intervention to attract suitable business/industry, through possibly acquiring land, and help development in particular areas where the District should move towards i.e. hi-tech, knowledge-based business.

It was also noted that it would be difficult to translate such developments in to Performance Targets.

Enterprise Culture – It was recognised at the NCC meeting that, traditionally, coalfield areas have had poor development of self-employment and entrepreneurial activities. RR acknowledged the work being implemented in Bassetlaw through the Backing Business in Bassetlaw initiative at Nottinghamshire Business Venture.

RR stated that these are the three common, countywide themes. The next step is to tie down exactly what the aims are, begin to establish what the targets are, and decide on the allocation of funding to the themes.

Michael Carnall commented that transport was not on the agenda/part of the LAA.

JW reported that it would be picked up through the Sustainable Communities block.

MC stated that he would like to see more importance being put on transport and that this area in particular lacks leadership and a defined strategy. MC also stated that transport is vital; it gets people to work, it is vital to businesses, and allows people to access leisure facilities etc.

Cllr Bowles raised his concerns about the confusing number of groups and bodies involved with transport, and that in some cases it seems that work is duplicated; it does not seem to be integrated.

PF explained that although there are no restrictions on training associated with RHADS, there is the basic problem with transport and people from the district being unable able to access RHADS.

MC reported that there is also a lack of RHADS directional signage within Bassetlaw.

RR suggested that the LSP Board need to voice concerns and lobby Nottinghamshire County Council Highways and RHADS Steering Group to highlight the issues and implement changes.

4. Introduction to Russell Slater, TCM

Please see Appendix 1 for copy of TCM presentation.

Russell Slater went through the key issues, and current/immediate issues associated with his role.

MC highlighted the problem of car parking in Retford; there are lots of spaces but there are issues around the cost and duration. MC stressed the need to encourage visitors/shoppers to stay all day, possibly with free parking on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays.

RS explained that the main issue at the present time is on street parking due to a lack of enforcement. However, the situation will be improved once decriminalised parking enforcement is introduced in 2007.

MC expressed the need for more niche businesses in Retford, and that at the present time it seems very difficult for businesses to set up and establish themselves due to the high level of associated costs i.e. rents, rates, tax etc.

PF reported that many small, niche businesses operate websites (from which they do most of their trade) and use small businesses premises as a base. This is usually so in towns where broadband is accessible.

RS stated that broadband is available in Worksop and Retford. RS also reported that he would like to encourage and develop a website presence for both town centres, as well as individual shops within these.

RS then went through the 'What Needs to be Done?' section of his presentation. This included short, medium and long-term aims and objectives.

RR suggested that it might be useful to offer training to some of the smaller town centre retailers.

PF agreed with RR and commented there may not be the demand. However, PF offered the support NNC for any initiative(s) progressed.

MC supported any attempts to provide training for retailers but cautioned that it may be difficult for many small businesses to spare staff time, and meet any potential costs

JW reported that a farmers market within Worksop, is an important issue raised through the Environment Sub-Group Action Plan. This was a key issue based on the success of the Retford Markets.

RS explained that it is anticipated that farmers markets would be established in Spring 2006.

JW suggested that they meet to discuss FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) and FIG (Food Initiatives Group), and initiatives around farmers markets and produce. In addition a Farmers Information Event was being arranged for November, which would be an ideal event to address the rural economy and farmers markets.

JW enquired as to the contact details for the clean up of car parks etc. i.e. broken glass, rubbish, vandalism etc., and whether this was publicised within the Car Park for the public to raise concerns.

RS explained that he is working very closely with Environmental Health re: centralising contact numbers and contacts, and working with target setting.

Cllr Bowles commented that there has been a massive drop in the level of crime in Bassetlaw, although the perception of crime is still very high. This includes Worksop Town Centre.

5. Update on the Northern Way

RR reported that he would distribute the Sheffield City Region plan. The key initiatives being:

- Connectivity
- Communications
- Transport
- 2nd generation broadband

6. AOB

RR reported that Sandra Withington had taken up the post of Development & Marketing Officer.

MC enquired about the possibility of attracting a Royal Mail museum.

JW explained to the members present that she is currently working with other LSP Sub-Groups to develop their action plans and new areas of work. JW asked the group whether members wanted the Economic Regeneration Action Plan to be updated, using the new format agreed. The group agreed that it should.

JW reported that there were a number of volunteers from other Sub-Groups who would like to attend the ER Sub-Group meeting: Celia West and Helen Goldsborough, in particular from the Learning & Skills Sub-Group. It was also raised that volunteers from this Sub-Group were needed to attend other Sub-Groups on an ad-hoc basis to further facilitate joint working.

JW brought to the group's attention that the LSP Annual Report is due to be produced in December 2005, and that if possible could the group provide her with case studies for inclusion in the report.

7. Dates of 2005 meetings

9 November, 3pm – 5pm, Ceres Suite, Worksop
Town Hall

Agenda TBC