

Lancashire County Council Beacon Case Study – Employment prospects for economic prosperity

The Rising Bridge Business and Enterprise Village project is being led by Lancashire County Council, in partnership with Rossendale Borough Council and the North West Development Agency. The project involves the remediation of 1.4 acres of brown field land to create nine, high quality offices as starter units for small to medium size businesses. This will create approximately 3,000 square metres (32,000 square feet) of commercial office floor space in support of the shared Jobs and Growth Agenda.

In addition to creating job opportunities, the Business and Enterprise Village, will enable existing companies to grow within Lancashire, and Rossendale in particular, rather than possibly moving outside the County due to the limited quantity of quality front door office accommodation. It is anticipated that the development will also attract higher value jobs into Lancashire.

Lancashire County Council has invested in excess of £6 million in this development with a grant of £820,000 from the North West Development Agency. The project is a visual sign of commitment to invest in the Lancashire economy during the current economic downturn and will assist in bringing prosperity to Rossendale and Pennine Lancashire.

The development will be of a high environmental standard and aims to attain a minimum BREEAM accreditation of Very Good. The project also includes provision for a new wildlife corridor/educational resource area on the shared boundary with the local primary school.

The key factors in enabling the project to move forward successfully have been the establishment of a project team with a clear vision together with a robust project plan, strong leadership skills, close partnership working with Rossendale Borough Council's Economic Development Team and Planning Departments, cross Directorate working with County Council colleagues and the support of the North West Development Agency.

Background

A totally new approach to economic development delivery in Rossendale was set up in 2006 with the establishment of a Joint Delivery Team (JDT). This initiative was developed by Rossendale Borough Council and Lancashire County Council to deliver a shared District and County agenda.

This joint approach enabled the additional resources and skill that were now available from two teams to be utilised more fully to focus on the actual needs of local businesses and in turn to take forward key regeneration projects.

This added to LCDL's long history of working with the districts to deliver a wide range of economic development services to support local regeneration activity and opportunities to help business start up and growth.

The Vision

The joint delivery team focuses upon the provision of a range of economic development services across Rossendale.

The team aims to improve business infrastructure to stimulate, facilitate and bring forward physical regeneration projects across the borough. This will be achieved through the development of appropriate partnership arrangements with the private sector, district economic development teams, regional and sub-regional agencies.

The Challenge

The following challenges have been overcome through the joint economic development agenda

- The alignment of LCC and Rossendale Borough Council economic and regeneration priorities into a unified programme
- To merge this programme with the Strategic Partnership's Regeneration Board priorities and both LCC's and Rossendale's Business Plans.
- To enable all individual projects to be considered within an overall regeneration framework with access to the required resources

Outcomes

The Joint Delivery Team has made significant contributions to the development of several major regeneration initiatives in Rossendale. Examples are listed below:

- The establishment of the joint delivery team office
- The exciting Adrenaline Gateway Project has created a series of world class mountain bike trails at Lee Quarry. Planning is underway to link to Cragg Quarry with multi user bridleways.
- The £7m Rising Bridge Business & Enterprise Village is due to be completed in summer 2010.
- Development of plans to create a high quality town square for Bacup
- Partnership working towards a commuter rail service from Rawtenstall to Manchester
- The team are working towards the redevelopment of Valley Centre Rawtenstall
- Investigating opportunities to create a business village at New Hall Hey.

To enable the above, officers have employed different ways of working to maximise the skills, experience and resources for the mutual benefit of the joint delivery team.

Lessons Learnt

Initially the bringing together of staff from two organisations was challenging. This was overcome by understanding better the skills and support each organisation can bring to the joint team and the value of this.

The creation of the joint team represented a chance to review current activities and prioritise those areas of work where the new team could make the most impact.

What Next

There is an ambitious work programme for the team. Delivery Plans are in place with strong project management inbuilt to achieve satisfactory programmes and outcomes. Future work being planned includes completion of future funding bids for projects, funding of over £4.5m of funding has already been secured for Rossendale from the Northwest Regional Development Agency.

For further information contact

Name: Chris Dyson, Senior Regeneration Project Officer
Phone: 01772 536600, 01706 252532
Email: Chris.Dyson@lancashire.gov.uk

Name: Fraser Nash, Senior Regeneration Projects Manager
Phone: 01706 252532
Email: fraser.nash@lancashire.gov.uk