

AMBITION

A Plan for Growth

Joint Economic Masterplan

Prepared by Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils on behalf of the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership



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Foreword

Ambition - n. a strong desire for success, achievement or distinction

Within the Sherwood Growth Zone, across the districts of Ashfield and Mansfield, we are determined to tackle challenges we face coming out of the recession. We will build on considerable efforts made, over recent years, to bring lasting improvements in the local economy and associated infrastructure. Both District Councils, working in partnership with other local organisations, recognise that we have a shared interest in achieving local economic growth and attracting and retaining investment, whilst improving our towns and the lives of people who live here.

The Ashfield and Mansfield Joint Economic Masterplan provides a view of how to best achieve this, acting as a catalyst for action and investment in the three key areas we have identified: our people, our businesses and our place.

The focus is on “Ambition”, meaning that all local people will not only benefit from these improvements, but will also be given the opportunity to contribute towards them. Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils are committed to helping shape this, through the Joint Economic Masterplan, and will be at the forefront of championing the area and facilitating recovery and growth.

However, our ambition can only be achieved together; this means closer working with partner organisations, potential investors, local businesses and local people. The Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership wholeheartedly demonstrates this commitment. The challenge is for all partners – public, private and voluntary sector – to work together to deliver this vision, tackle barriers and build on our opportunities to achieve prosperity. This is even more important during the current economic climate.

This Joint Economic Masterplan document has resulted from extensive research, along with valued comments received from the consultation exercise in the summer of 2011. It is designed to be a dynamic, living document, responsive to changing circumstances and priorities, and will be under continual review by the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

We look forward to working with you to deliver our ambition.

Mayor of Mansfield

Leader of Ashfield District Council

Executive Summary

This strategic document sets out an ambitious new vision for the economy of Ashfield and Mansfield, as a single functional economic area, including the steps necessary to successfully deliver against that vision.

Vision

“To be ambitious for Ashfield and Mansfield by providing the opportunity for people and business to grow and prosper”

The rationale for a joint approach is firmly embedded in the two districts’ common industrial past and strong sense of community. Although focused on the two Districts at its core, the Masterplan is based on the principle of “flexible geographies”, by adopting strategies and actions, at the appropriate spatial level, to maximise benefit to the economy.

An Economic Masterplan is a relatively new concept, which seeks to integrate an area’s economic strategy with its physical environment, to create a powerful development and promotional tool for an area. Put simply, the Economic Masterplan provides a “road map”, setting out how we achieve our shared vision and consists of a strategic element and a Delivery Plan.

The Economic Masterplan has been developed during a time of rapidly changing policy and recessionary challenges. However, the economic challenges and opportunities facing Ashfield and Mansfield remain largely unchanged. The approach, aligned with the “localism” agenda, is to focus on issues facing the economy within the relevant geography. It should almost go without saying, that the Masterplan has been developed to align with the appropriate national, sub-regional and local strategies

Extensive research, which identifies key challenges and opportunities for the two districts, was carried out and a key message that resulted from the research is:

The Economic Masterplan must respond positively to these challenges. To realise the economic potential of the Ashfield and Mansfield economy, productivity must be increased by attracting and retaining more skilled people of a working age into highly productive jobs in sectors with a comparative advantage for the area. It is vital that local people have the skills needed to attract investment and drive growth.

In response our aim is:

- To create a mix of productive and competitive businesses
- To attract and retain a skilled workforce
- To provide high quality employment opportunities for all

Achieving against these objectives will lead to:

- Embedding a culture of aspiration within our communities
- Securing a quality environment for people to live, work and invest

At the heart of the Economic Masterplan are five themes, which together, will ensure we remain focused on the key areas of **People, Business** and **Place**:

- Skills & Aspiration – Ensuring local people are equipped with the right skills to access new opportunities in employment, help stimulate growth and raise productivity.
- Employment – Connecting local residents with new employment opportunities and working with employers to meet their skills and recruitment needs.
- Enterprise – Support pre-start, new and existing local businesses. It is critical that local business support is maintained within the area.
- Investment – Promote the area as a place to invest and a place where businesses are supported to diversify and grow.
- Property – Ensure the area offers an attractive and balanced range of good quality office, commercial and industrial premises. Property is key to creating a competitive location for investment and growth.

Action will be taken across all of the themes and the priorities and background evidence, for each of the themes, are detailed in the main Masterplan document.

Action Plans

The action plans, that together form the Delivery Plan element of the Masterplan, consist of interventions that the two District Councils will lead and/or play a substantive role in delivering. These interventions will usually also rely on other partner resources to be delivered successfully and will be:

- Comprehensive – does the action complement the agreed principles of change and clearly meet the vision and objectives?
- Achievable – is the action deliverable, given available resources and the benefits proposed?
- Inclusive – is the action accessible to all in the community taking account of equality and diversity?
- Environmentally Sustainable – does the action avoid undue negative impact on the environment?

Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation

Whilst delivery of this Masterplan is through the District Councils, the effectiveness of this also relies on working in partnership with other stakeholders and partners, with an interest in the local economy. This is made possible through the Masterplan's governance structure, the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership (SGZP). The SGZP represents the most relevant body for ensuring the Economic Masterplan remains on track and targeted on the economic needs and growth aspirations of the Ashfield and Mansfield area. The SGZP will work closely with the local councils, to ensure activity remains accountable and will also help to attract investment and lobby sub-regional and national policy makers – particularly the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The Economic Masterplan will be reviewed annually, to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose and the associated action plans will be monitored on a quarterly basis.

The Vision

“To be ambitious for Ashfield and Mansfield by providing the opportunity for people and business to grow and prosper”

Against this vision, the Economic Masterplan is based the following principles of change, which will guide the delivery of growth and regeneration:

- Developing a new economy for the area, built on old strengths and focused on raising productivity and embracing innovation
- Creating economic resilience, through the sensitive rebalancing of the economic base
- Building upon and enhancing regeneration efforts to date
- Selling the area as a place to invest and succeed
- Ensuring our communities are sustainable and able to benefit from prosperity and better quality of life
- Ensuring supply meets demand, through tackling market failure – the basic economic principle

Section 1 - Strategic Overview

1. Introduction

The Economic Masterplan for Ashfield and Mansfield seeks to tackle our long-term economic challenges and rebuild the economy, focused on growth and prosperity and a better quality of life for all our communities - now and in the future.

This masterplan has moved on from previous strategies, as it is not restricted by boundaries. Although focused on the two Districts at its core, the Masterplan is based on the principle of “flexible geographies”, by adopting strategies and actions, at the appropriate spatial level, to maximise benefit to the economy. For example, a physical regeneration project, within one of our town centres, would have a local impact, but would have a knock-on effect for neighbouring towns. At the opposite end of the scale, attracting new investment into the area needs a strong local brand, but also needs to recognise wider influences, such as transport links and being close to major cities.

Through this approach, we can work to improve every facet of the local economy and not limit our ambition.

The rationale for a joint approach has been evidenced by research, completed to support the Economic Masterplan. The area acts as a single economy, including sharing employers and employees, potential growth sectors and infrastructure.

These links are also historic, with a common industrial past, focused on manufacturing, textiles and coal mining, characterised by urban growth, economic independence and a strong sense of community.

However, since the late 1970's, the area has declined as a result of major economic change in the UK, bringing with it a legacy of physical decay, economic stagnation and unemployment within our communities.

The Economic Masterplan's approach is not to focus on deprivation and the negative, as has been the traditional approach. Since the weaknesses and challenges facing our economy and communities are symptoms, the key is to focus on a cure, based on boosting productivity, promoting growth and providing people with the skills required to improve their quality of life.

This positive approach is based on solid and confident foundations with the Ashfield and Mansfield conurbation being recognised as the 5th largest economy in the East Midlands and the largest in the County outside of Greater Nottingham.

This positive focus is also based on the strong track record of joint working, between Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils, alongside partners, in creating the climate for regeneration and delivering innovative economic development activity. The most notable example of this is the highly successful, multi-million pound Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) programme, which has helped to create a new entrepreneurial culture and boost business start-ups in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In addition, the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership has grown in strength to become the main partnership body responsible for driving forward the Economic Masterplan. Established to oversee the development of Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR), the Partnership aims to bring as many as 10,000 new jobs to the area. The Sherwood Growth Zone has stimulated significant investment and new jobs to the area to date. The redevelopment of the Kings Mill Hospital, the Co-operative Group's major office and logistics base at junction 28 and planning approval being granted for the Lindhurst development (subject to potential call-in), all demonstrate that there remains a strong impetus for investment and growth in the area, despite the recession.

Most importantly, the Economic Masterplan will only be successful if it leads to sustainable development and transformational regeneration. The challenge, set by the Coalition Government, is to "rebalance the economy" and our research suggests that there is a great deal of scope for the economy of Ashfield and Mansfield to improve productivity, the root of growth and prosperity.

To this end, the Economic Masterplan cannot be viewed in isolation and must work within the wider strategic context, which includes housing supply and growth, transport and infrastructure investment and social renewal.

2. What is an Economic Masterplan?

An Economic Masterplan is a relatively new concept, which seeks to integrate an area's economic strategy with its physical environment, to create a powerful development and promotional tool for an area. Its main aim is to provide a deliverable and strategic approach for raising productivity, by tackling economic underperformance, which has limited growth and prevents the area reaching its economic potential.

Unlike previous strategic approaches to economic development, the Economic Masterplan is not static, but represents an agreed and continually evolving framework for action, all based on a sound understanding of economic performance and relevant to all with stake in the local economy.

The economy does not stand still and so neither should the Economic Masterplan, which should always answer the following key questions:

- What sort of economy do we want?
- What will the economic drivers be?
- What do we need to do to ensure the local residents benefit?

Since local government has a key role to play in leading change and championing the area, the Councils must act as place shapers, using their statutory powers to stimulate change, a role enhanced through the Localism agenda.

The Economic Masterplan must also act as a "call to arms", challenging all stakeholders and partners across all sectors to help deliver the vision, tackle the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities to achieve growth and prosperity.

The Economic Masterplan seeks to answer two key questions for Ashfield and Mansfield:

- 1) How will the area develop, grow and earn its living over the next 10-15 years?
- 2) What will this look like?

Directed towards improving the area's economic growth, the fundamental elements of a successful Economic Masterplan include:

- Sound economic assessment and understanding of the local economy
- Clear economic vision
- Clear direction including agreed priorities for action
- Focused delivery based on key actions and projects
- Robust measurement and review process
- Continuous engagement with stakeholders

A lot of work has been done to understand the key influences facing our economy. The documents compiled to provide this information, are available on the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership website www.sherwoodgrowthzone.org.

The Ashfield and Mansfield Economic Masterplan is in two parts:

1) Economic Strategy

The narrative for the Economic Masterplan including:

- Vision and key principles
- The diagnosis: the case for regeneration and growth
- The cure: the priority themes

2) Delivery Plan

A set of action plans based on the key interventions and priorities of the Economic Masterplan focusing on results and projects to achieve the vision.

To put it simply, the Economic Masterplan provides a “road map”, setting out how we achieve our shared vision. To this end, any activities driven by the Economic Masterplan, must be measured against the following:

- Comprehensive – does the action complement the agreed principles of change and clearly meet the vision and objectives?
- Achievable – is the action deliverable, given available resources and the benefits proposed?
- Inclusive – is the action accessible to all in the community taking account of equality and diversity?
- Environmentally Sustainable – does the action avoid undue negative impact on the environment?

Although it provides a framework to 2020, the Economic Masterplan will be reviewed annually, to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose. The associated action plans will be monitored quarterly.

Further detail on this approach is provided in Section 5 – Governance.

3. The Policy Context

The Economic Masterplan has been developed during a time of rapidly changing policy and recessionary challenges. The Coalition Government has introduced a new approach to economic growth. However, the economic challenges and opportunities facing Ashfield and Mansfield are unchanged and the Masterplan has been developed within this changing context. The approach is to focus on issues facing the economy within the relevant geography, which accords with the “localism” agenda as well as the previous government’s sub-regional approach to economic development.

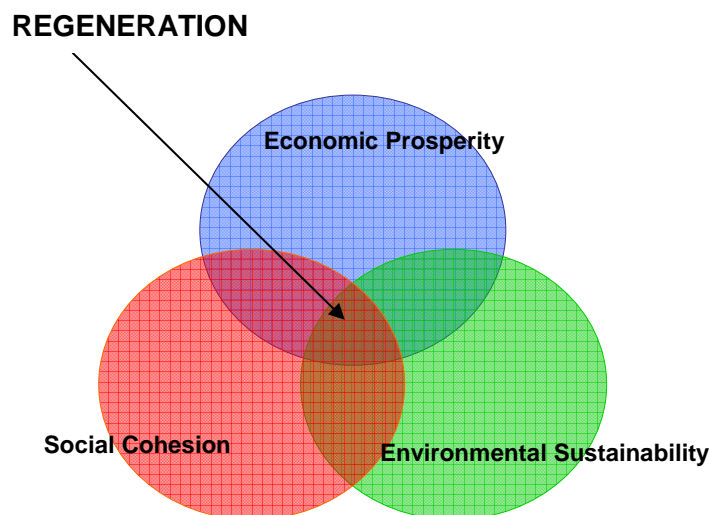
❖ National Policy Context

The Economic Masterplan’s strategic approach, is rooted in the previous government’s ***Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR)*** published in July 2007 and its follow-up document, “Prosperous Places” published in March 2008.

The SNR proposals covered four key areas:

- Strengthening the regional level
- Empowering local authorities
- Supporting local authorities to work together at the sub-regional level
- Reforming central Government’s relations with regions and localities

These proposals were based on “Place Shaping” - promoting the wellbeing of a community and ensuring local people enjoy a high quality of life. This is achieved through providing effective local services, promoting economic prosperity, social cohesion and environmental sustainability locally. Successful regeneration is about balancing a dynamic approach with a sensitive one.



The Economic Masterplan responds to this “Place Shaping”, by advocating that local authorities should take a lead role in building and shaping local identity. This entails working to establish conditions required to help the local economy to succeed and working with other organisations to resolve complex challenges and provide solutions to allow growth and prosperity.

For the Coalition Government, the new policy driver for economic growth is to “re-balance the economy” towards private sector jobs and wealth creation. Although policy is still evolving, the government’s new approach was set out in the White Paper “**Local Growth: realising every place’s potential**” (published October 2010), a key plank of the “Localism” agenda, with the following themes:

- Shifting power to local communities and business
- Promoting efficient and dynamic markets and increasing confidence to invest
- Focused investment

This new approach has led to the dismantling of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and replacing them with business-led **Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)**, to “provide the clear vision and strategic leadership to drive sustainable private sector led growth and job creation in their area”. LEPs are expected to provide an integrated approach around the supply and demand aspects of economic development, transport, housing and spatial planning.

Alongside the establishment of LEP’s and the transition from regional to local economic development, the white paper also set out proposed reforms to the planning system and the publication of a new National Planning Policy Framework. The new framework advocates that the planning system should proactively support sustainable development and give new powers to communities and businesses through neighbourhood plans. The need for adequate and appropriate housing and economic growth are key drivers behind this approach.

The Coalition Government has also announced a range of financial incentives to promote economic growth, to replace the traditional grants of the past. The new incentives, being developed, include the proposal for local authorities to retain business rates and therefore benefit from increasing yields. This should be able to be combined with new borrowing powers, facilitating mechanisms such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), which enables borrowing against future increases in business rate revenues.

The role of a dynamic, skilled and flexible labour market – the supply side - is important to economic growth and a key issue in the Ashfield and Mansfield area. The Coalition Government have introduced a number of new policies to tackle improving skills and reducing unemployment.

The Work Programme has been established to reform welfare to work provision, by simplifying the benefits system and providing a more flexible and responsive service to people looking for work. The UK also needs to ensure that we have the right skills mix to maximise employment and growth. The BIS strategy, “**Skills for Sustainable Growth**”, has set out a number of recommendations to drive policy and investment, including expanding apprenticeships to supply the national demand for technical skills, providing employer incentives to support training, promoting enterprise skills in schools and providing restructured lifelong learning support.

The Coalition Government has also proposed reforms to the demand side - most notably around business support, with the reduction of the national Business Link service at the end of 2011. Although web-based support remains, LEPs will determine the level of local business support.

The reforms proposed through the **Localism Bill** are significant for local authorities, service providers and local businesses. The challenge is even more acute, given cuts in public sector spending (**Comprehensive Spending Review 2010**).

KEY MESSAGE

A key challenge, for the Economic Masterplan, is to adopt new and innovative ways of delivering regeneration, without major public sector investment, instead maximising the value and effectiveness of existing resources, through working in partnership with all stakeholders in the local economy.

❖ **Sub-Regional/Nottinghamshire Context**

The Ashfield and Mansfield economy is heavily influenced by sub-regional and county developments. **The D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership** covers the counties of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and the two cities of Derby and Nottingham. Although the LEP is still being developed, the D2N2 proposal to Government included a number of key objectives for future prosperity:

- Building on shared advantages in internationally competitive science, manufacturing, engineering and creative industries, to drive productivity growth as we develop a low carbon economy.
- Developing our distinctive cultural, leisure, sport and tourism offer to world class standards.
- Ensuring that the benefits of sustainable economic growth are shared across our cities, towns and rural communities.
- Developing a skills programme, building on the strengths and reputation of our first rate FE and HE sector, that will meet and drive up employers' current and future skills demands.
- Continuing to secure investment in regeneration and infrastructure projects to stimulate private sector growth.

Strategy is being developed in the areas where the LEP will have a key influence: enterprise, innovation & sector support; inward investment and trade; promotion and tourism; employment & skills; and infrastructure & planning (including housing).

The **Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Employment & Skills Board's** Strategic Plan has four priorities to achieve sustainable employment and business growth:

- Employer Leadership
- Economic Recovery and Growth
- Higher Skills for Nottinghamshire
- Employment for All

Other sub-regional activity has also been considered, to ensure the Economic Masterplan complements and derives maximum benefit. These include close working with the Joint Leaders Board, Invest in Nottingham, the Nottinghamshire business engagement group, the proposed Economic Priority Forum and the continued work of the Economic Resilience and Science City Board.

❖ **Local Strategic Context**

The “place shaping” agenda is fundamental to ensuring sustainable economic prosperity and a decent quality of life for local people. The Economic Masterplan’s role is to drive forward such economic growth, complementing existing local strategies, to ensure development is in the best interests of the local area, its businesses and communities.

Both districts have their visions here outlined in this respect embedded in their respective **Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)** – the plans of plans – setting out the long-term priorities for an area, agreed by partners, stakeholders and the community.

The priorities stated in the Ashfield Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2026 are as follows:

- Develop and Improve Aspiration, Skills and Employment for All - We will work hard to raise aspirations in our schools and our adult population and encourage re-training wherever possible. We will also identify opportunities for the future and ensure that local people have the right skills to benefit from them.
- Support Enterprise and Business Growth - We will continue the good work on Enterprise Support and develop our fledgling businesses by making sure they are signposted to the right services.
- Tackle Worklessness and Dependency - We will continue to support efforts to engage those on out of work benefits and ensure that local people benefit from the job opportunities that are created locally.
- Support Growth and Investment - We will also work with employers and developers to ensure that Ashfield benefits from growth and investment as the economy recovers from the recession.

The Mansfield Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020, “The Big Picture”, has a largely overlapping set of priorities:

- Low Income Levels – Reduced gap between average income in the Mansfield District and the rest of the East Midlands.
- Employment Rates – Increased number of working age people in employment,
- Business Growth – Increased number of business start-ups and stronger business survival rates.
- Enterprise Culture – Development of the enterprise and entrepreneurial skills of local people, with the aim of creating a more diverse and resilient Mansfield economy.
- Employment Sites – Employment sites developed around the Sherwood Growth Zone, optimising the Mansfield/Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR) and town centre opportunities.
- Transport Infrastructure – A new transport interchange for Mansfield and improved rail services.
- Skill Levels in the Workplace – A year on year increase in average skill levels in the workplace.
- Attracting and Retaining Creative and Innovative People – More graduates, professionals and entrepreneurs living and working in Mansfield.

The Mansfield SCS also states specific priorities in relation to its town centre:

- Transport Facilities and Access
- High Quality Town Centre Developments
- An Attractive Environment
- Events and Marketing
- The Market
- Culture and Tourism
- A Safer Town Centre

The two strategies, in the main, share the same core priorities of:

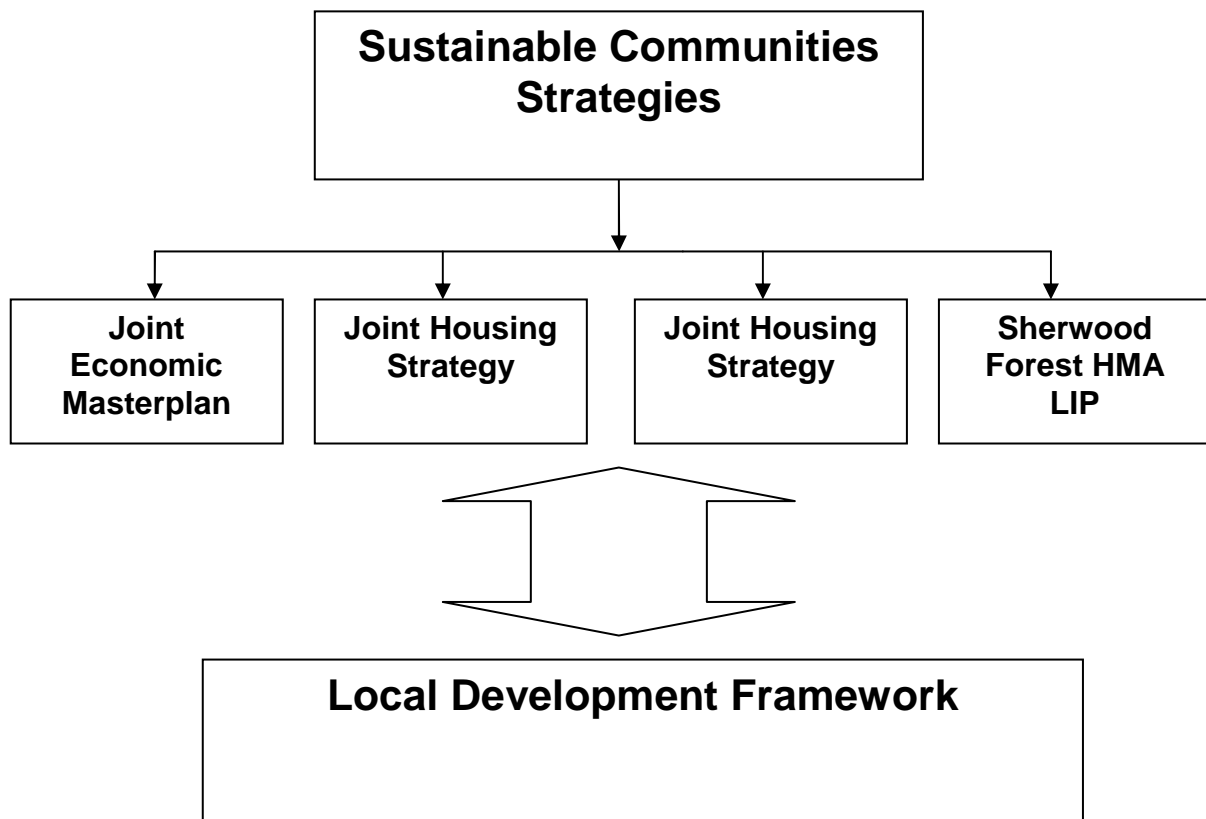
- Improving Aspiration and Skills of local people
- Reducing Unemployment and Worklessness
- Support for Enterprise / Business Growth and Encouraging Investment
- Improving the physical infrastructure of the Districts

In order to achieve the vision, a number of strategies are in place, focused on the key elements of the SCS – housing, transport, infrastructure and economic development. These include:

- Sherwood Forest Area Joint Housing Strategy
- Local Transport Plan (Nottinghamshire wide)
- Sherwood Forest Housing Market Area Local Investment Plan

The Economic Masterplan seeks to enhance and complement this strategic approach.

Each district's **Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy**, provides the delivery for the physical aspects of the SCS, underpinning the economic, environmental and social objectives of both people and place.



Section 2 - The Case for Regeneration

The Diagnosis

1. Where We Are Now – the Challenges & Opportunitites

Before any action can be taken, the Economic Masterplan needs to understand the challenges and opportunities within the economies and the communities of Ashfield and Mansfield.

❖ The Challenges

Many of our area's challenges are historical, rooted in the industrial decline, since the late 1970's, which undermined the area's reason for being, leaving economic underperformance, social deprivation and environmental blight.

As stated in Section 1, much regeneration, has taken place over the last 20 years, resulting in a great deal of success in transforming the fortunes of Ashfield and Mansfield and providing a new economic purpose. However, much work still needs to be done in tackling these challenges.

This agrees with the findings of the **Coalfield Regeneration Review Board**, set up by Government to review what has been achieved so far, lessons to be learned and what still needs to be done. The final report, published in September 2010, looked into practical issues faced by former coalfield areas and asked the key question: **Are coalfield areas still a special case?**

The review concluded that the coalfield areas did still have a case for specific intervention, as "economic recovery in these areas is still fragile and more susceptible to the recession than other local authority areas". It noted, that although much of the environmental impact of the industrial past had been successfully regenerated, coalfield communities still suffered in other areas, such as employment, health, training and skills, housing, aspiration and enterprise rates and social disaffection.

The report recommended that "tackling the deep seated structural and social problems, requires a joined-up, multi-agency approach" and that "local authorities are best placed to understand their own areas and therefore have a central role to play in the next phase of coalfield regeneration".

These findings support the approach being taken in the Economic Masterplan and a detailed diagnosis of the challenges for Ashfield and Mansfield, is provided below.

❖ The Opportunitites

It is all too easy to focus on these economic and social challenges. However, the focus of the Economic Masterplan is positive - growth and prosperity, creating opportunity and improving quality of life for the local people. Ashfield and Mansfield have a range of competitive advantages and opportunities that can help the area achieve its potential. These include:

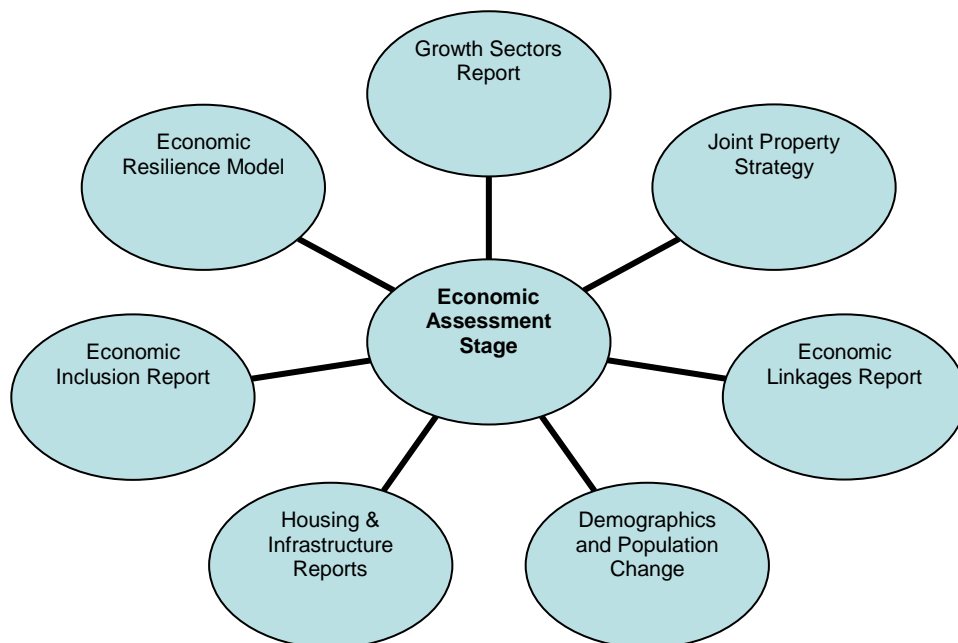
- Being the fifth largest conurbation in the East Midlands
- Central UK location
- Proximity to major cities
- Excellent transport connections
- Competitively priced land and premises
- A hardworking and flexible workforce
- Improving levels of enterprise
- Positive links to Further and Higher Education
- Affordable and varied housing
- Access to excellent leisure and historic destinations

2. The Evidence Base

In order for the Economic Masterplan to be effective and action focused, a great deal of research was undertaken to understand the key issues:

- What are the local growth sectors for in the future?
- What commercial property types are required to accommodate these?
- How resilient is the area in dealing with economic shocks and how can this be improved?
- How well does Ashfield and Mansfield work with surrounding areas, cities and towns to improve the economy and help local businesses?
- Who is excluded from participating fully in the local economy?
- What types of housing and infrastructure is needed in the future?
- How will the local area's population change in the future?

To help us answer these questions, a number of detailed reports have been commissioned and prepared as part of the assessment stage. All these reports and the resultant Assessment Stage Final Report are available on the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership website: www.sherwoodgrowthzone.org.



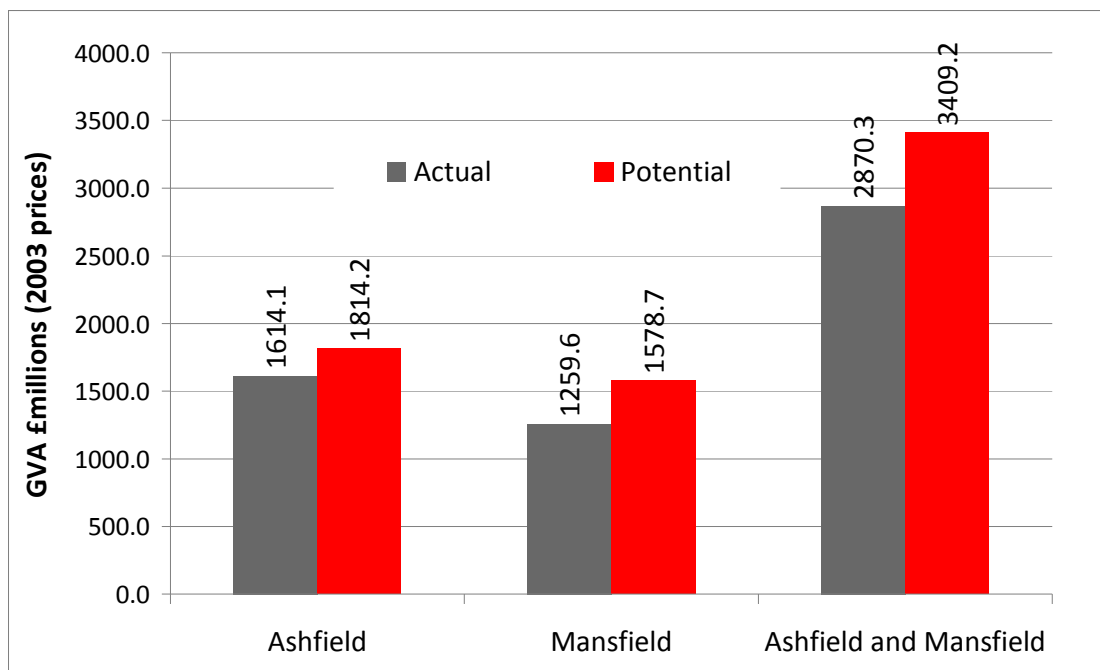
In addition, the Economic Masterplan responds to the **Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Economic Assessment**, identifying the economic challenges within the County and how it has been affected by the recession. This document has been used to develop the **D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership**, established to drive forward growth across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, in line with the Coalition Government’s economic policy.

3. The Prosperity Gap Model

A comprehensive analysis of the Ashfield and Mansfield economy has been undertaken using the “Prosperity Gap” model, measuring the gap between actual output and its potential based on the following four components of GVA.

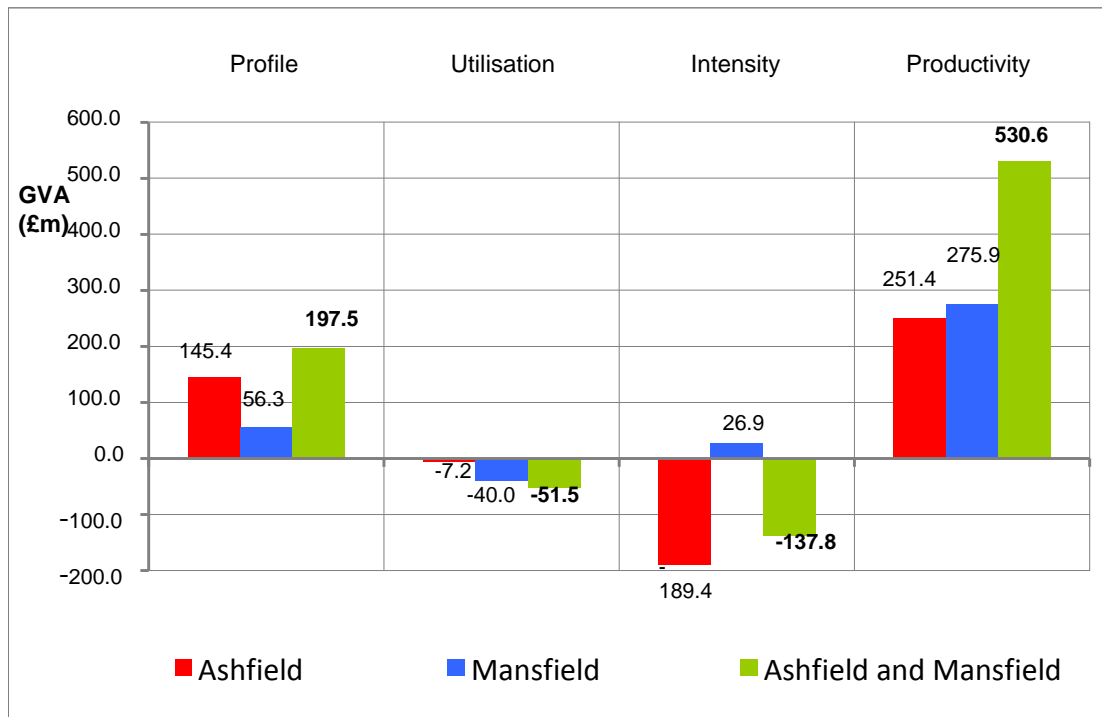
- Labour Productivity – the average value of output produced by an average worker
- Labour Intensity – the average number of hours a typical employed person works
- Labour Utilisation – the ratio of people in work to the number of people of working age
- Labour Profile – the ratio of working age population to the total population (the dependency ratio)

An indication of a strong economy is one which has a labour profile with a good stock of working age people, effectively utilised in highly productive employment.



The above chart summarises the “prosperity gap” for Ashfield and Mansfield, based on actual output against the national average GVA. Currently, the Ashfield and Mansfield economy produces £2,870m of output per year against a UK average of £3,409m.

The analysis concludes that the economy for Ashfield and Mansfield underperforms by **£539m per year**.



In order to diagnose the reasons for this underperformance, a closer analysis of the four key components of GVA is required, as set out in the table above.

- Labour Profile**

The demographic profile of the labour market is a disadvantage, indicating that there is a lower percentage of the population of the Ashfield and Mansfield area of working age, compared to the national average. Basically, there are not enough people to do the work required to increase output.

This increases the performance gap by £198m.

- Labour Utilisation**

The analysis indicates that the employment rate, amongst those who could work and participate in the economy, is actually an advantage within Ashfield and Mansfield.

This closes the performance gap to £146m.

- Labour Intensity**

The data collated for the intensity component, is where Ashfield and Mansfield performs the strongest. This means that people in the area actually work longer hours than the national average.

This further closes the performance gap to £7m.

- Labour Productivity**

The final component is the most significant, with regard to economic performance and the key driver for economic growth. However, productivity is where Ashfield and Mansfield performs weakest against the national average.

This increases the final performance gap to £539m.

❖ Summary

The prosperity gap analysis clearly indicates that increasing productivity is the key to growth and prosperity and should be the focus of the Economic Masterplan.

The Ashfield and Mansfield prosperity gap is the result of:

- A lower than average working age population, exacerbated by poor skill levels and a benefit dependency culture, thereby reducing the effective labour force
- High levels of low paid and low skilled employment, which means higher value industries are reliant on imported higher skilled labour
- Significantly lower levels of productivity per head, despite long working hours, caused by a low value industrial mix and weak skills profile

KEY MESSAGE

The Economic Masterplan must respond positively to these challenges. To realise the economic potential of the Ashfield and Mansfield economy, productivity must be increased by attracting and retaining more skilled people of a working age into highly productive jobs in sectors with a comparative advantage for the area. It is vital that local people have the skills needed to attract investment and drive growth.

4. Place Resilience

The ability to sustain economic growth is dependent on how resilient an area is to local, national and international “shocks”, such as a recession. As such, the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) was commissioned to assess the resilience of Ashfield and Mansfield.

Place resilience depends on how well the three different components of the economy interact and work together, these are:

- **Commercial** – economic wealth creation generated by businesses that are privately owned and profit motivated.
- **Public** – services delivered on behalf of government organisations, whether national, regional or local, funded by the public purse.
- **Social** – activities delivered by community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations trying to bring about positive local change.

The relationships between each of these three components, and how they respond to external influences, from global through to local, are assessed against four descriptive rankings – Resilient, Stable, Vulnerable and Brittle.

The conclusions reached are summarised below:

- The resilience of the Ashfield and Mansfield economy is considered as slightly vulnerable.
- The relationship between the commercial and public sector, alongside local governance and identity, are considered the most resilient elements.
- The most vulnerable elements are the relationships between the social and both the commercial and public sectors.
- The way the area relates to the external economy is vulnerable, especially within the commercial sector, which appears to be quite parochial.
- The public sector has the strongest influence over developing relationships between all the other elements of place and needs to take greater responsibility for enhancing these relationships.

KEY MESSAGE

Greater partnership and collaboration across both districts is vitally important to increasing the area's resilience and provides a clear rationale for the Joint Economic Masterplan and the continued work of bodies such as the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership. It is also clear that economic prosperity and social wellbeing go hand in hand – all sectors of the economy have a role to play working together.

5. Growth Sectors

Experian provided a detailed analysis, identifying potential growth sectors to maximise productivity and drive the future prosperity of Ashfield and Mansfield. The comparison between historic and future trends suggests a gradual but clear move away from traditional sectors towards the following:

- Business Services
- Health
- Wholesale
- Manufacture of transport equipment
- Transport and logistics

Nonetheless, the area's strengths in some manufacturing sectors (e.g. transport equipment, metals etc.) and other niche areas, such as sustainable construction, energy and environmental technologies, need to be recognised, maintained and fostered.

Additionally, although retail and construction are not high growth sectors, they will continue to play a significant role in relation to key aspects of regeneration, such as town centre development and further physical development around the Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR).

KEY MESSAGE

It is vital that the right climate for investment exists, in order to achieve a more productive, diverse and robust balance across Ashfield and Mansfield. The aim is to ensure all sectors realise their potential and work to make the area and its business base more resilient.

6. Agglomeration Factors

The Coalfield Regeneration review highlighted that areas such as Ashfield and Mansfield have been historically self-sufficient, due to the nature of their traditional industrial base, which has tended towards an insularity, both economically and culturally.

A study, completed by the Work Foundation, indicated that Ashfield and Mansfield needs to recognise and maximise the opportunities in strengthening links with surrounding areas, most notably nearby cities. This will result in greater economic growth and prosperity for local people and businesses.

The study strengthens the assumption of a strong interdependency between Ashfield and Mansfield, but also recognises the “pull” of adjacent economies such as Nottingham and Sheffield, as well districts such as Bolsover and Newark & Sherwood.

A number of key conclusions help to shape the Economic Masterplan and future policy. To summarise, the key recommendations include:

- Addressing the skills gap, high levels of unemployment and access to employment, through improving labour relationships and public transport links, particularly with Nottingham.
- Exploring lessons learned from areas that have built mutually beneficial relationships with large economic centres (e.g. Rotherham-Sheffield).
- Working with surrounding areas to attract inward investment.
- Supporting the private sector to develop links beyond the local area, particularly in the growth sectors.
- Maximising the local benefits of anchor institutions, including West Nottinghamshire College, Kings Mill Hospital and Rolls Royce.
- Strengthening traditional industrial sectors, in both value and productivity, recognising the importance manufacturing still plays.

KEY MESSAGE

Local businesses are not maximising the benefit of being located close to Nottingham and other neighbouring economies. Public sector facilitation will help boost productivity within service sector industries, which are particularly sensitive to these effects.

7. Economic Inclusion

The Prosperity Gap model indicates that Ashfield and Mansfield’s employment rate performs well against the national average. However, this masks very serious worklessness in local communities, weakening economic potential.

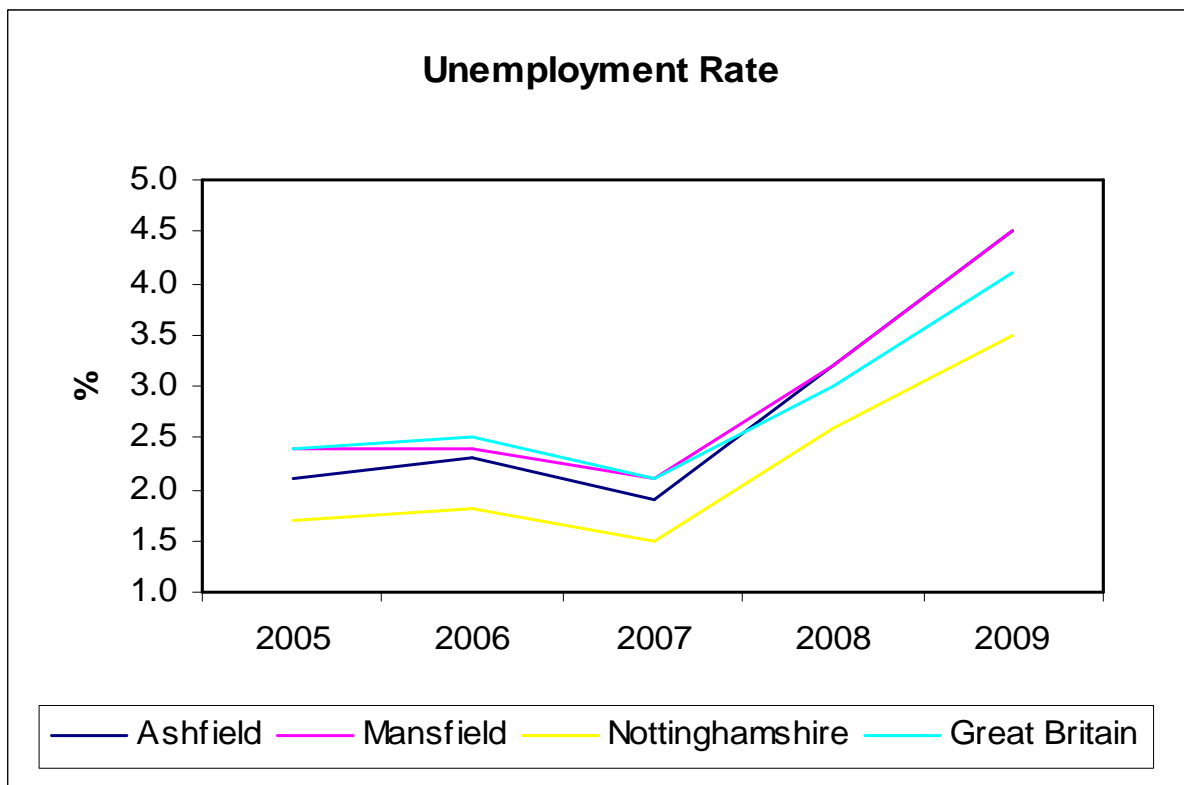
The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), defines worklessness as: *“people of working age who are not in formal employment, but who are looking for a job (the unemployed), together with people of working age who are neither formally employed nor looking for formal employment (the economically inactive)”*

The Industrial Communities Alliance published a report in October 2009, “The Impact of Recession on Unemployment in Industrial Britain”. The report took a wider view of “unemployment” in the UK – not the narrower JSA claimant count approach adopted by the Government. The report concluded that industrial communities had entered the recession in a fragile state of structural decline with the recession biting particularly hard in traditional manufacturing.

As a result, “real” unemployment, which includes non-claimant unemployed and those on incapacity benefits, had a major effect on areas that already had a pre-existing stock of long-term unemployed.

The Economic Inclusion Report, compiled to support the evidence base for the Economic Masterplan, provides further detail of the scale of unemployment and worklessness within Ashfield and Mansfield.

The report provides headline information on GVA (productivity), employment and unemployment, as well as detailed data, to explain the figures.



KEY MESSAGE

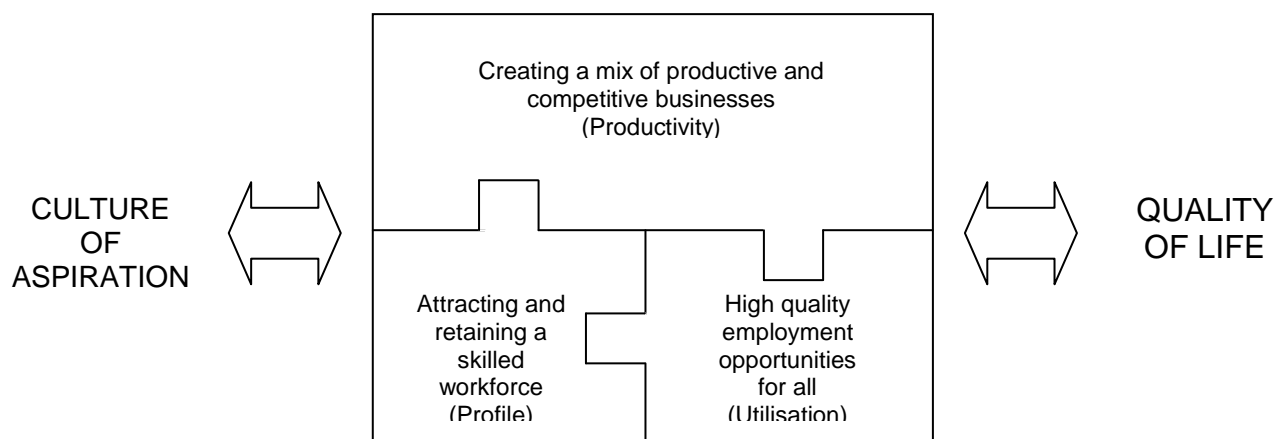
Low skills and worklessness restrict Ashfield and Mansfield’s capacity to increase productivity. In order to maximise the ability of the labour supply to drive growth, it is vital that opportunities are open for all to be economically active, through allowing access to education, training and employment.

Section 3 - A Strategy for Regeneration

The Cure

1. Framework for Growth – The Key Economic Objectives

To achieve the economic vision, the Economic Masterplan is focused on delivering against a set of objectives, providing a framework for growth.



Based upon the “Prosperity Gap” analysis, the three **Economic Objectives** focus on driving productivity and growth and raising GVA:

- To create a mix of productive and competitive businesses
- To attract and retain a skilled workforce
- To provide high quality employment opportunities for all

Through focusing on the three economic objectives, the Economic Masterplan helps achieve **two key outcomes**, that will both influence and benefit from driving growth and are key factors in successful and sustainable regeneration:

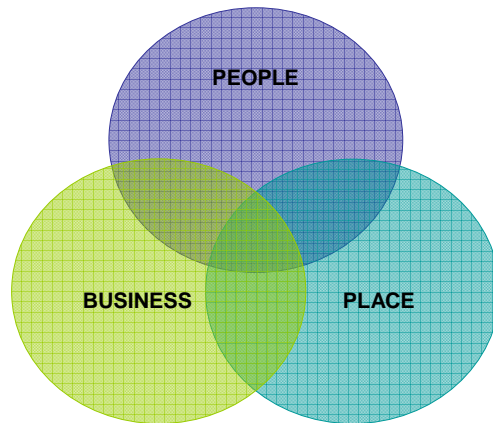
- Embedding a culture of aspiration within our communities
- Securing a quality environment for people to live, work and invest

2. The Priority Areas

In order to be successful, the Economic Masterplan sets out how economic resilience and prosperity will be achieved, against these areas:

- People
- Business
- Place

These represent the building blocks of the Economic Masterplan and are closely interlinked. Every theme and project will touch at least one area and ensure that all action takes into account the economic, physical and social aspects of regeneration.



3. Themes

The Economic Masterplan is not a static document. Alongside the research base and this strategy there is a **Delivery Plan**, made up of individual action plans, to drive the framework for growth and provide a “road map” for economic growth and regeneration. The District Councils will not only look to instil these thematic values in the external environment but also endeavour to incorporate them into their own practices and procedures.

The Delivery Plan is focused on actions that need to be driven or coordinated by the two District Councils. This Delivery Plan will be subject to constant review, to ensure it remains focused. All interventions and activities need to be:

- Comprehensive – does the action complement the agreed principles of change and clearly meet the vision and objectives?
- Achievable – is the action deliverable, given available resources and the benefits proposed?
- Inclusive – is the action accessible to all in the community taking account of equality and diversity?
- Environmentally Sustainable – does the action avoid undue negative impact on the environment?

At the heart of the Economic Masterplan are 5 themes, which together will ensure we remain focused on people, business and place:

- Skills & Aspiration
- Employment
- Enterprise
- Investment
- Property

❖ **Theme 1: Skills & Aspiration**

This is focused on ensuring Ashfield and Mansfield have the right skills to meet new opportunities in employment, stimulate growth and raise productivity. To attract and retain an adaptable and modern skilled workforce, we must ensure that individuals have access to relevant, high quality education, training and employment opportunities.

Ashfield and Mansfield has a relatively poor skills profile, when compared with the national average. Although average qualification levels have increased across Nottinghamshire, within the Mansfield TTWA, just under 40% of the working age population do not achieve Level 2 (five GCSE passes A*-C). This compares to a national average of 30%. It is therefore critical to economic growth that we raise retention and increase participation in post-16 education, through helping to provide opportunities to access high quality learning.

Ashfield and Mansfield have a relatively high employment rate for residents, with no qualifications, showing a strong demand for low skilled employment. Although not entirely negative, this situation is a major factor in suppressing the increase in productivity required to achieve growth. As the economy restructures for growth, it is important that focused vocational education and training is available to meet the needs of existing and future employers. Clearly, raising aspirations and ensuring a full range of opportunities is available for people to develop is vital to success.

Proposed key actions:

- Coordinate needs of employers, residents, schools and colleges, matching supply with demand and maximising opportunities for all.
- Work with schools and colleges, to raise the aspirations of young people and provide a clear understanding of the opportunities open to them.
- Support HE/FE provision available within Ashfield and Mansfield, through better linkages and physical improvements.
- Work to attract, retain and increase the number of highly skilled individuals within the local economy.

❖ **Theme 2: Employment**

This is focused on connecting residents with employment opportunities and proactively working with employers, to meet their needs. The key is to fully utilise the existing labour market to meet demand, rather than importing higher skilled workers to fill higher value jobs.

Analysis shows that Ashfield and Mansfield currently utilise their existing labour force well, with employment rates higher than the national average. However, this is largely due to poor skills in lower value industries.

Worklessness remains a key challenge, with official figures masking the real damage that generations of unemployment and ill health have on individuals, families and communities.

Future productivity growth will rely on ensuring local people can still meet changing employment needs, maximise local take-up of jobs and encourage those not economically active to participate and return the world of work.

Proposed actions:

- Provide leadership/coordination, to a joined-up approach.
- Develop links to employment, through activity such as procurement, planning, linking with businesses and promoting the work ethic in schools.
- Reduce number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Improve access to employment, through better connectivity (e.g. public transport), especially in rural areas
- Ensure that social housing is available, with good access to employment.
- Support the most vulnerable, to help create the financial independence and confidence required to re-enter employment

❖ **Theme 3: Enterprise**

This is focused on supporting new and existing businesses in Ashfield and Mansfield. Although growth sectors and attracting investment are vital, future prosperity and increasing productivity also relies on new local businesses being created, good survival rates and a better rate of churn. The area has a larger than average proportion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) - mostly those with less than 50 employees - but business start-ups and self-employment still lags behind the UK average.

Recently, enterprise development and the creation of an entrepreneurial culture has been demonstrably boosted via the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) funded activity. It is important that this local focus on business support is maintained, as the Business Link service reduces and local models evolve. Ashfield and Mansfield must be seen as a supportive environment for businesses, with tailored business support, including coaching and mentoring, being easily accessible.

Proposed key actions:

- Help to shape the level of business support available locally.
- Understand local business support, to ensure maximum benefit for pre-start, start-up and established businesses.
- Increase levels of enterprise and entrepreneurship, through coaching and support for pre-start and start-up businesses
- Promote the development of local Enterprise Clubs to promote self-employment
- Improve access to finance for SMEs, through targeted interventions
- Maximise the potential of public procurement opportunities, to support local businesses.
- Facilitate social enterprise and work with the third sector, to ensure vital services to the community can continue, through sustainable business models

❖ **Theme 4: Investment**

This is focused on selling Ashfield and Mansfield as a place to invest and an area where businesses are supported to diversify and grow. The area enjoys an enviable competitive edge, in terms of location and availability of land, and this has been the focus of the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership. Further work between the public sector, developers and local businesses is required to ensure the area is marketed, to new business and potential inward investors.

Although Ashfield and Mansfield should retain a strong identity and brand, it is important that the benefits of our proximity to major cities, such as Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield, are maximised. An important way to boost enterprise and investment, will be through promoting innovation and diversification within the local economy and exploiting international trade opportunities. This will not only be focused on the growth sectors identified, but will also ensure other key areas of the local economy remain competitive.

The role of the natural environment is also important in stimulating economic activity and efforts will be made to promote a green economy, through sustainable energy and construction and unleashing the potential of the low carbon economy to create wealth and employment.

Proposed key actions:

- Promote capital investment in new and established businesses .
- Create better links between the local businesses and Higher Education, to boost innovation, R&D and knowledge transfer.
- Work with planning, to attract inward investment and business expansion.
- Work with developers and landowners to improve the offer of the area
- Understand growth sectors and develop relationships with key companies, in order to attract investment.
- Support supply chain activity and other business networking activity, to ensure local businesses can improve. e.g. through inter-trading, collaboration and e-commerce.
- Work closely with Experience Nottinghamshire, to promote and improve the visitor offer and ensure businesses can benefit from high quality services and accommodation.

❖ **Theme 5: Property**

This is focused on ensuring Ashfield and Mansfield offers an attractive and balanced range of good quality office, commercial and industrial premises. Property is key to creating a competitive location for investment and growth.

The recently published Joint Property Strategy, produced by Innes England, demonstrated significant areas of market failure. This highlighted an under-supply of mid-sized, move-on space for both office and industrial premises, which inhibits local business growth and expansion. It also recognised that target sector growth relies on an adequate supply of sustainable employment sites.

Emerging Government policy suggests that opportunities and powers will be made available, at a local level, to drive business investment, including the potential to retain Business Rate revenues and the re-emergence of the Enterprise Zone concept.

Although the focus will be on commercial property development, economic growth and improved quality of life is also dependent on ensuring the right mix of housing is available to existing communities and new residents. In addition, green infrastructure is also vital to sustainable economic development, through linking homes with jobs. Sustainable, high quality mixed development is also a priority of the Economic Masterplan.

Proposed key actions:

- Intervene directly or by working in partnership, to address gaps in the property market.
- Deliver existing town centre masterplans, through strategic land and property development and/or promote schemes for intervention by the market.
- Develop the potential of an Enterprise Zone for the Sherwood Growth Zone to encourage development and investment
- Investigate the potential for innovative models to fund physical regeneration. For example, Local Asset Backed Vehicles (LABV) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Understand the property needs of new and existing businesses and build relationships with property agents and developers.
- Maintain an up-to-date commercial property directory, in order to provide an effective service to business and potential investors.
- Enhance the public realm in urban areas to encourage greater connectivity and use for local people and provide an attractive environment for investment

4. The Role of Town Centres

The regeneration of our town centres remains a priority, playing significant role in realising growth and quality of life aspirations and providing a recognisable destination to the Economic Masterplan. As well as providing employment opportunities, they are an important measure of the prosperity of an area, that can influence investment.

The economic focus is on improving town centres as destinations for local people, visitors and investors, ensuring they represent the right balance of offer and choice, within a quality environment.

Physical masterplans exist for most of the major urban centres in Ashfield and Mansfield and renewed efforts will be made to bring forward key schemes with positive economic and visual impacts.

Section 4 - Monitoring & Evaluation

1. Context

The Economic Masterplan is not just a strategy; it is focused on actions to achieve growth and represents a new way of working together, to achieve shared goals. Whilst delivery of this Masterplan is through the District Councils, the effectiveness of this also relies on working in partnership with other stakeholders and partners, with an interest in the local economy. This is made possible through the Masterplan's governance structure, via the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership.

Monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure the Masterplan remains fit for purpose. Actions will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Comprehensive – does the action complement the agreed principles of change and clearly meet the vision and objectives?
- Achievable – is the action deliverable, given available resources and the benefits proposed?
- Inclusive – is the action accessible to all in the community taking account of equality and diversity?
- Environmentally Sustainable – does the action avoid undue negative impact on the environment?

2. Governance – Roles & Responsibilities

The Economic Masterplan provides a focus for strengthening existing partnership arrangements, rather than creating new structures. The Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership represents the most relevant body for ensuring the Economic Masterplan remains on track and targeted on the economic needs and growth aspirations of the Ashfield and Mansfield area.

The Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership will work closely with local councils, to ensure activity remains accountable and will also help to attract investment and lobby sub-regional and national policy makers – particularly the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Place Resilience study indicates that the three sectors of the economy need to fully interact to achieve economic prosperity. The roles can be summarised as follows:

- **Local Government** – Councils should provide leadership – enabling economic growth and ensuring accountability
- **Private sector** – businesses will provide the main drivers for growth and prosperity by providing employment, investment and innovation
- **Voluntary & Community Sector** – working with communities to ensure they are able to benefit from economic opportunities

All three sectors need to champion the area as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

3. Review Framework

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each theme are included in the Action Plans. Targets will be agreed by the Sherwood Growth Zone on an annual basis and progress against these reviewed quarterly.

In addition, it is proposed that the strategy element of the Economic Masterplan is reviewed by the Sherwood Growth Zone Partnership every two years, to ensure it remains fit for purpose, in light of changing macro-economic factors and achievements to date.

Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Target
Businesses assisted to improve performance	540
Jobs created	136
Businesses improving performance	6
Businesses created/attracted	145
People assisted to start a business	45
Spin-out businesses started	14
Grants distributed	£424,000
Increased availability of serviced employment land	10 hectares
Reuse/reallocation of brownfield land	4 hectares
Increased private sector investment	£6,000,000
New available commercial floor space	6,000 sq m

Section 5: Delivery Plan

This section holds the action plans for each of the themes identified in Section 3 of the Masterplan.

All of the themes have some degree of overlap with each other, but as the first two themes, Skills & Aspiration and Employment are very closely related, their action plans have been brought together.

Theme 1 & 2 : Skills & Aspirations and Employment – 2011 - 2014

Overview

The business base within Ashfield and Mansfield generally consists of lower value activity and is highlighted through a heavy reliance on lower wage manufacturing, wholesale/retail and increasing growth of public sector employment. Employment in knowledge based industries is lower in Ashfield and Mansfield when compared to the national average. Low numbers of the resident population are employed in higher level managerial or professional jobs. The area suffers from a low skills, low wage equilibrium and imports higher skilled workers from outlying areas to fill the higher value jobs.

The creation and accessibility of higher value jobs by local people would increase the levels of disposable income and levels of spend in the local economy. In turn a more sustainable environment for small businesses to start, grow and prosper would follow.

Current Status

Ashfield and Mansfield residents have a low level of high skill levels (17.6% qualified to Level 4 or higher and 34% obtaining at least a level 3 qualification).

Within Ashfield, workplace earnings are higher than the national average, having experienced marked increases between 2002 and 2009, indicating the presence of higher value economic activity within the District. In Mansfield residents' wages are lower than the sub-regional, regional and national levels and in the case of Ashfield, are lower than the workplace earnings, suggesting that residents are not benefiting from the propensity of knowledge intensive activity within the District.

19% of the working age population in Mansfield and 16% in Ashfield have degree level qualifications compared to the national average of 29%. Both districts have a higher than average proportion of residents with no qualifications and poor levels of literacy and numeracy.

Since 2007 unemployment rates across both districts have escalated, in line with regional and national trends. Some of the more deprived wards across the districts are suffering from very high levels of unemployment.

Ambition

- Raise aspirations
- Raise confidence levels
- Raise skills levels
- Increase the number of people with higher level skills working in the district
- Improve access for all residents to high quality employment opportunities
- Improve enterprise skills
- Increase earning potential

Measures of success

- Higher skills levels
- Higher employment rates
- Higher earnings

Targets are listed against individual items in the action plans

Action Plan: Skills & Aspirations

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
<p>Develop and deliver programmes to assist with the retention of highly skilled individuals working in businesses across the two districts.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Direct intervention through delivery of District Council led initiatives.</p>	<p>Creation of a highly skilled workforce</p> <p>ERDF targets over 3 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62 businesses assisted to improve performance • 25 jobs created
<p>Develop and deliver skills development programmes to assist women facing barriers to entering or re-entering the labour market, training or self employment.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Direct intervention through delivery of District Council led initiatives.</p>	<p>Increased number of women assisted to consider starting a business and improving the local economy</p> <p>More skilled, confident women looking to improve their quality of life.</p> <p>ERDF targets over 3 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 businesses assisted to improve performance • 30 people assisted to start a business

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
Develop and deliver initiatives and programmes to assist students in schools to raise aspirations and improve their enterprise skills and entrepreneurial outlook.	High/ Medium	Work closely with local schools, local colleges, training providers and local employers to deliver direct provision and interventions.	<p>More young people with greater aspirations to succeed</p> <p>More young people with a greater knowledge and understanding of becoming more enterprising and entrepreneurial</p>
Deliver a series of forums/seminars coupled with a skills mentoring programme designed to increase the enterprise start-up rate.	High/ Medium	Direct intervention through delivery of District Council led initiatives.	<p>An improved entrepreneurial culture with the skills and confidence to take enterprising ideas forward.</p> <p>ERDF targets over 3 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 businesses assisted to improve performance • 15 people assisted to start a business
Programmes aligned with national skills strategies – e.g. skills for Sustainable Growth – expanding apprenticeships, initiating demand led growth, SME focused programmes, adult community learning and training for young adults.	High/ Medium	Deliver ourselves and in partnership to enhance provision by identifying gaps in support.	Improved knowledge economy, improved level of earnings, reduced levels of worklessness, raised levels of achievement and increased productivity

Action Plan : Employment

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
Develop strong working relationships with local employers in order to gather intelligence and understand their recruitment and skills needs.	High	Direct, face to face engagement and support. Undertake primary research to provide evidence base.	A strong evidence base to support the strategic actions.
Bring together key partners on inward investment, workforce development, employment and community engagement to ensure that opportunities to connect local people to new and existing job opportunities are maximised.	High	Work with partners to maximise opportunities.	A joined up approach across the Shared Service to ensure maximum benefit for employers and local people looking for job opportunities.
Identify potential funding sources or routes to enable translation of strategy into delivery in order to react to a demand led approach to employment and skills.	High/ Medium	Take a lead role in ensuring strategic actions are delivered in response to demand.	Ability to respond to the needs of employers and local people by pooling resources and applying a joined up approach to accessing funding routes and sources.
Maximise opportunities that arise for local economic benefit through public sector procurement and planning opportunities.	High/ Medium	Implementation of District Council led interventions.	Local people in search of employment benefit from local development opportunities in their communities.

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
Develop and deliver a joined-up approach across the shared service to increase employment rates locally by delivering initiatives and events to connect local people with local employers.	High	Take a lead role in facilitation and delivery.	An inclusive partnership approach developed towards employment and skills initiatives, events and programmes across the shared service area for the benefit of local people and local employers.
Promote best practice and motivate employment and skills practitioners within the District Councils to adopt this	High	Champion and influence the development of new practices and procedures internally and externally – leading by example	Better and increased opportunities for local people

Theme 3: Enterprise – 2011 - 2014

Overview

Enterprise and an entrepreneurial culture are central to the development of a successful local economy that relies on the creation of wealth by its local businesses. This theme encompasses the support of new and existing businesses with the emphasis on the creation of new businesses and productivity improvements in existing businesses. This will lead to the creation of quality jobs that in turn will require highly skilled people. There are therefore obvious links to the 'Skills & Aspirations' and 'Employment' themes if we are to ensure that local people benefit from the creation of these successful businesses. The 'Property' aspect is also important to ensure that we not only have the necessary mix of commercial premises to support start-up businesses as well as 'grow on' space but also the appropriate broadband infrastructure to support developing businesses and attract inward investors.

Current status

Over the last few years we have seen improvements in enterprise development and entrepreneurial culture as well as a more diversified economy. However, business start-ups remain below the national average and the area underperforms as regards productivity. There is therefore a continuing need to support start-up and established businesses to improve this performance. Programmes of support such as LEO over the last few years have shown the benefit of more intensive 'face to face' support. However, the business support landscape is changing given the current economic climate with a move towards more web based support and involvement of the private sector. There is therefore a challenge to try and retain some of the more successful intensive support schemes that appear to provide a benefit through such funding as ERDF and sustainability of the successful parts of the LEO programme.

Ambition

Improvements in business start-up rates and productivity of local businesses leading to a more diversified and competitive business sector.

Measures of success

Improvements in business start-up and survival rates, productivity, job creation and average wage rates.

Targets are listed against individual items in the action plan

Action Plan

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
Support Established Businesses To Improve Productivity	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through 'information, diagnostic & brokerage' service direct businesses to appropriate business support provider e.g. national Business Link website, 'mentorsme', Business Coaching for Growth (to be introduced January 2012), Solutions for Business products/services, universities and appropriate private sector providers. • Direct support through ERDF funded 'Ambition for Ashfield & Mansfield' programme (Jan 2012 to Dec 2014) including business advisor support, business crime prevention grant scheme & grants to support innovation. • Establish and maintain strategic relationships with a portfolio of businesses within the identified growth sectors i.e. business services, health, wholesale, manufacturing transport equipment, transport & logistics to identify and respond to their business support needs. • Develop good working relationships with potential funders e.g. local banks, Connect Midlands and business angel networks. 	<p>Ambition for Ashfield & Mansfield support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist 421 businesses to improve performance of which 281 succeed through measure of productivity- 'Gross Value Added'. • 38 jobs created. • 14 'spin out' businesses started. • £424,000 grants distributed. <p>Sustainable businesses leading to improved business survival rates.</p> <p>Creation higher valued jobs.</p>

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
Support Pre-start Individuals	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting individuals to appropriate national/local business support programmes e.g. Jobcentre Plus Enterprise element of DWP 'Work Programme', LEO Enterprise Coaches, Prince's Trust & Nottingham Trent University-The Hive Proof of Concept programme. • Support the development and promote local Enterprise Clubs such as those run by the LEO programme and the 'Ambition for Ashfield & Mansfield' Entrepreneurs' Forum. • Targeted awareness raising of the benefits of self-employment e.g. 'Women in Enterprise-Women Who Do' programme. 	Increasing levels of business start-up.
Identification of gaps in local business support need & development of local programmes to satisfy need.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In liaison with private sector identification of business support gaps & activity to meet the need. • Identification of funding opportunities to support appropriate activity. • Collaborative bids to funding agencies to enable commissioning of locally based business support programmes. • Monitoring of programmes to ensure providing relevant outcomes. 	Business support programmes targeting local issues.

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
Business start-up activity	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting to relevant national/local programmes of support e.g. Jobcentre Plus for New Enterprise Allowance scheme, National Business Link and Start-up Britain website, Prince's Trust Enterprise Programme. • Direct delivery through ERDF funded 'Ambition for Ashfield & Mansfield' Outreach Business Start-up Programme including workshops and advisor support. • Incubation facilities providing cost effective premises and supportive environment for businesses to develop and grow. 	<p>Ambition for Ashfield & Mansfield support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 142 businesses created • 70 jobs created <p>Identification of potential growth businesses that create higher valued jobs.</p>
Maximise the potential for public sector contracts to support local businesses.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local businesses to be aware of potential opportunities. • Support local businesses to become 'business ready' in applying for relevant tendering opportunities. • Champion and promote local procurement within District Councils to include in policy. 	<p>Business survival. Increase in local businesses delivering public sector goods/services.</p>
Advocates for business community within the Local Authority.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local businesses as appropriate in dealings with Local Authority departments. • Review and improve communication with local business community. • Improve internal communications with Local Authority Departments to provide supportive environment for business sector. 	<p>Supportive environment leading to development of business sector and Ashfield/Mansfield recognised as 'business friendly'.</p>

Theme 4: Investment – 2011 - 2014

Overview

Business investment relates mainly to capital investment in premises, research & development (R&D) and innovation. Capital investment and having the available funds to finance this is inextricably linked to efficiency, productivity, innovation and success in an increasingly dynamic and competitive market. Sector mix refers to which sectors currently thrive locally and how we would like to see this develop over the next few years. Whilst the Experian research has highlighted 5 growth sectors this is not an exhaustive list and it is envisaged that there will be other sectors or cross-cutting areas which will also drive growth over the time period covered by the Joint Economic Masterplan. These combined themes are key drivers to the productivity area within the Prosperity Gap model, which accounts for over 98% of the total gap between where our economy is currently performing and its potential. Whilst there are firm links here between this theme and others, it is argued that the strongest ones are with enterprise and skills & aspirations.

Current status

We currently under-perform significantly in this area. Capital investment is relatively low, although in the past grants such as the Grant for Business Investment (GBI) and its forerunners (SFIE, RSA, REG) have helped support some schemes that would otherwise not have gone ahead. Unfortunately these funding packages are no longer available unless something is organised locally to fill this void. The difficulty of accessing bank funding, due to the aftermath of the global financial collapse, has also restricted what companies can afford to do under current market conditions. In terms of key sectors whilst we have some strength in some of the areas there is great opportunity to raise our game, particularly within health and business services, where current activity tends to be lower value. There is an opportunity for more business-facing relationships to be established here through dedicated account management, a role which is expected to feature highly in the associated shared services agenda.

Ambition

We want to have a more productive local economy, with higher skills levels and a higher average GVA, with higher expenditure on R&D activities by local companies.

Measures of success

We will measure through increased productivity and a higher average GVA, with higher expenditure on R&D activities.

Action Plan

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
Promote capital investment in new and established businesses	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brokering onto other providers – public and private sector • Direct intervention – explore opportunities of delivering loan/grant scheme. Opportunity following termination of GBI. Opportunities for further ERDF, WNF, funded programmes, etc. 	Increased productivity in participating firms, raising aspirations within businesses.
Promote innovation, knowledge transfer and R&D activities	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote benefit to business – i.e. effect on profitability, etc. • Promote technical capability of universities and colleges and own graduate and undergraduate placement schemes. Evidence benefit to businesses through case studies. • Promote own assistance (innovation grant) and other assistance available, e.g. NCC business innovation support, Technology Strategy Board programmes (Manufacturing Advisory Service, technology & innovation centres, grant for Research and Development, etc.), i-net support, R&D tax credits, etc. 	Increased awareness of support available, increased take-up of assistance and improved productivity in participating firms.

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
Relationship Management model	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account management provided to key businesses, especially those in growth sectors. • Regular business survey to be completed to understand needs, strengths, weaknesses, etc. • Regular workshop programme tailored to needs of companies engaged. • Exploit as competitive advantage to attract further investment (case studies). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of business needs • Increased interaction and better relationships between the Council and local businesses • Improved issue resolution • Increased business retention • Businesses assisted to improve performance • Increased business attraction
Spatial planning	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote regeneration section as single point of contact for businesses to liaise with planning, etc. Consider up-skilling to provide more value added. • Explore potential to use simplified planning areas within existing legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased customer service • Improved issue resolution

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
Investment Promotion	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote area with a specific interest in growth sectors working in partnership with other promotion agencies e.g. Invest in Nottingham, D2N2, UKT&I • Delivery of ERDF funded Think Ashfield/Mansfield project • Work with developers and other partners to improve the investment offer of the area • Explore “Ambassadors” programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More businesses attracted • More businesses retained • Increased investment • Increased development activity • ERDF outputs: 12 businesses assisted to improve performance; 3 jobs created; 6 businesses to improve performance; 3 businesses created/attracted
Supply chain activities	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate opportunity for business directory • Research options to provide matching mechanism, e.g. capacity register • Provide/facilitate networking opportunities for inter-trading, collaboration and improved access to public procurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of more expenditure in the local economy • Improved prospects for local firms through improved inter-trading, collaboration and public procurement.
Positive action to attract new businesses	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby government for “enterprise zone” status • Explore potential of own enterprise zones or simplified planning areas to attract key sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of new and priority sector businesses attracted • Improved employment opportunities for local people

Theme 5: Property – 2011 - 2014

Overview

Property is a function of business productivity and the Property section of the Joint Economic Masterplan is designed in this context to create conditions which:

- Ensure a higher proportion of the local community are in work
- Ensure those in work earn ever increased wages
- Ensure we capture a larger proportion of local/sub-regional spend

This is achieved through an understanding of 'competitive advantage' and the advantages accrued from external economies of scale (location advantages) which support the growth of an area. This recognises a strategy beyond competing on price to one which develops an offer to business which adds to their competitiveness advantage. Property is a part of this wider offer the strategy must make.

Current status

Recent studies by Experian and Innes England has suggested the area will see a continued contraction of general industrial activity across the conurbation with a steady increase in B1 demand centred on Mansfield and the location advantages of the town centre; with further high growth of distribution operations across Ashfield, maximising access to the motorway junctions vital to these sectors. This continued rebalancing of the local economy has left an oversupply of committed employment land much of which is of questionable quality and a mismatch of supply and demand in the built stock of commercial premises.

In addition weak macro-economic conditions have led to limited private sector activity and reduced employment all within a context of harsh public sector cuts. This environment will require the area to respond to current conditions whilst planning its brighter future through exploiting its competitive advantage, which must focus on the 5 growth sectors and will require innovative ways of delivering local priorities.

Ambition

- Correct the oversupply of employment land, challenge suitability of committed sites and to address the legacy of redundant sites in urban centres and at former industrial areas
- Redress market failure through facilitating the delivery of available sites the market requires at the right locations which are free of developer tie
- Ensure a local supply of commercial premises is available to both attract mobile investment projects and to support high growth local firms in key priority sectors
- Provide a balanced property portfolio of premises to address local oversupply of units < 5,000 and an undersupply of property 5 – 50,000 sq. ft.
- Attraction of investment to deliver Town Centre priorities across the main urban areas

Measures of success

- Increased availability of serviced employment land – 10 Ha.
- Reuse / reallocation of Brownfield land – 4 Ha.
- Increased private sector investment - £6,000,000
- New available commercial floor space – 6,000 sq m
- Delivery of intervention sites (see action plan)

Action Plan

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
1. Develop relationships with local, regional and national property agents, developers and intermediaries	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDF • One to One meetings • Events • Promotion and marketing activities 	Understanding of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current and future property requirements • current and future supply of property
2. Manage network of Neighbourhood Business Incubation Units	High	Provide facilities management across all 7 properties in the network	Provide accommodation for start-up premises in the more deprived areas of the conurbation
3. Maintain an up-to-date property register of all available commercial properties across MDC / ADC	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly call to all agents • Production of statistics demonstrating enquiries, visits, lettings, etc 	Understanding of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of local product • current and future property requirements • current and future supply of property
4. Analyse and interpret market demand and supply	High	Production of local property report circulated to audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a property offer orientated toward growth industries • Identify gaps in the local property market • Inform LDF process

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
5. Implement an Account Management function which is proactive in targeting growth businesses and reactive to key investment enquiries	High	1 st response to send information – property plus general offer 2 nd response – follow up to ensure have and understood information – arrange for them to visit locality – arrange property viewing – begin developing bespoke offer the area can make – facilitating meetings with supply chain – planners – etc.	Winning Business – The location is competing with other areas in UK and abroad.
6. Property	High	Directly intervene in schemes. Meet identified demand in property solutions at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport interchange • Belvedere Street • Queen's Head • Mansfield Brewery Site • Pleasley Hill Regeneration Area • Strategic Car Park • Town Hall development • MARR employment site(s) • Mansfield Woodhouse Gateway Scheme • Projects identified in the town centre masterplans for Sutton-in-Ashfield and Kirkby-in-Ashfield • Projects identified in the town centre masterplan for Hucknall 	Without support these schemes will not come forward

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
7. Better use of District Council assets	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the economic (IRR), social and political need to hold property • Consideration of the role District Council assets can play in satisfying business needs and regeneration priorities • Consideration to the role LABV can play in: • Capital programme • Delivering regeneration priorities • Work with Property Services to maximise and to realise the value of Council owned assets to support priorities 	<p>The assets of the district are described as the land, buildings and infrastructure. These assets need to be orientated to support the demand from growing local business and the attraction of new opportunities.</p> <p>Better use of the assets owned by the two district councils will support the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Medium term financial strategy • The Capital programmes • Delivering Regeneration priorities
8. Manage areas of change	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply side analysis of commercial land and property – identification of which land is not suitable for future growth needs • Develop spatial policies to allow transitional areas whilst capturing planning gain to support provision of land and property in suitable areas • Explore the use of simplified planning schemes 	<p>Provide a more efficient use of planning time</p> <p>Provide better relationships with property market professionals</p> <p>Provide support to sustain, grow and attract businesses</p>

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
9. Promote priorities through LDF and other spatial policies	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment land • Area Action Plans • Key Infrastructure provision Group (KISP) 	Ensure future flow of land and properties
10. Develop schemes where a partnership approach is required	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Notts College • Stockwell Gate North • Mansfield General Hospital site • Hucknall Relief Road (NCC) • Making It (Making It) • Projects identified in the town centre masterplans for Sutton-in-Ashfield and Kirkby-in-Ashfield • Projects identified in the town centre masterplan for Hucknall • Rolls Royce employment site at Hucknall • Business Premises Improvements Grants 	Without support it is unlikely these schemes will come forward

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
11. Connectivity: business with residents and residents with business	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Transport linking neighbourhoods with employment and town centres • Mixed use schemes – incorporating residential development or live work schemes • Linking with neighbouring areas – i.e. Bolsover / Shirebrook a solution to Warsop? Nottingham a solution to Hucknall? 	Ensuring that (1) local residents maximise their opportunities in the local labour market and (2) The local areas maximise the capture of disposable income.
12. Promote schemes which the market can bring forward	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speculative development (identified gaps in supply/ demand) • Stockwell Gate South • White Hart Development • Mansfield Shoe Co. • Handley Arcade • Midland Hotel • Portland Gateway • Lindhurst • Penniment Farm • Castlewood • Optima Park • Prologis Park • West of Fulwood (Magfern Estates) • Blenheim Lane 	Market can deliver these schemes freeing resources to concentrate on more difficult schemes

Action	Rank	Role	Benefit
13. Develop a high quality public realm	Low	Public realm strategy for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mansfield • Mansfield Woodhouse • Sutton-in-Ashfield • Kirkby-in-Ashfield • Hucknall • Warsop 	A need to create an environment which is supportive of business investment – understanding the linkages within and between schemes and areas 'External economies of scale'
14. Sustainability of areas and activities	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the USP of areas i.e. Mansfield Town centre for Multiple Retail, Castlewood for Logistics, White Hart Development for niche retail or buildings i.e. NBIU's for business start ups, i-centre for innovative companies • Area based marketing strategies to support emerging areas or to manage decline 	The need to manage decline and to support emerging sectors, activities or locations.