

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR CHESTERFIELD AND NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE (2005 – 2015)

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FOREWORD

Whilst this is the first Economic Development Strategy to have been jointly prepared by Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, the two authorities have a long track record of working together. Both Councils were founder members of CHART (Chesterfield Area Regeneration Team) which was established as an economic partnership in 1993 and is now the Local Strategic Partnership. Both areas face a similar set of issues following the decline of traditional industries such as coalmining and heavy engineering. In response to these difficulties, our Councils recognise the need to diversify the economy and create new employment opportunities. Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire are part of the same economy: there is a shared understanding that what is good for one area is also good for the other.

The recent opening of the Westthorpe Business Innovation Centre, underlines the Councils' ambition to be a catalyst for the growth of new economic activities, notably the higher value service based sectors which are likely to form the basis of a competitive local economy in the future. We are now starting to see the success of this approach with a number of companies expanding out of the existing innovation centres at Tapton Park and Dunston Technology Park and going on to build their own premises and create employment.

However, this Strategy is not just about 'hi-tech' jobs, it's about delivering a broad range of job opportunities that are accessible to local people. One way we will achieve this is by making our area an attractive place to do business. We will continue to invest in our town centres and encourage the re-development of derelict industrial sites for a mix of employment, housing and leisure uses. We will also build on our new tourism brand to attract more visitors to North Eastern Derbyshire.

We fully recognise the vital role played by all those individuals, companies and organisations who are seeking to improve the local economy and look forward to working with them in the future.

Councillor Ray Russell
Leader
Chesterfield Borough Council

Councillor Graham Baxter
Leader
North East Derbyshire District Council

INTRODUCTION

This Strategy has been prepared by Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council to provide a framework for the delivery of their economic development and tourism services. It aims to raise the economic performance of North Eastern Derbyshire and address the regeneration needs of local communities which have been adversely affected by industrial restructuring.

The starting point for the Strategy is a 'vision' of where the area's economy will be in 2015. The achievement of this vision poses a number of challenges, not just for the two local Councils and the County Council, but for all stakeholders with an interest in the area's future economic prosperity. Council actions alone cannot deliver the vision: this requires all stakeholders to work closely together in order to achieve success.

The Strategy sets out the programme areas and objectives that will guide activities in the accompanying Action Plan. The Action Plan provides the specific project details and will be updated on an annual basis. Overall progress will be measured against a number of headline indicators and at a localised scale through the successful delivery of the projects contained in the Action Plan.

VISION STATEMENT

Our **vision** for North Eastern Derbyshire is that by 2015 we will be:

‘A competitive location, providing quality employment opportunities.’

North Eastern Derbyshire will have a diversified and increasingly ‘knowledge based’ economy. A number of companies will have successfully expanded out of the network of business and innovation centres and will be providing well paid employment for local people. The area’s traditional strength in manufacturing will be maintained following the sector’s shift into higher value added activities. A skilled and creative workforce will attract new investment into the area.

Chesterfield will be firmly established as a sub-regional service centre, offering a quality range of shops, commercial, leisure and cultural facilities. This will be complemented by thriving smaller town centres across North Eastern Derbyshire.

The ‘Peak District’s Historic Border Country’ will be a popular and distinctive tourism destination. The image of the area will have changed with negative perceptions of industrial decline replaced by a clear recognition of the area’s attractiveness as a place in which to live, work, visit and invest . Sustainable forms of development will positively promote environmental well-being.

Participation rates in both employment and education will be at or above the national average. Disadvantaged communities will have been revitalised and all sections of the community will be sharing in the area’s opportunities and prosperity.

THE ECONOMY OF NORTH EASTERN DERBYSHIRE – A SNAPSHOT

This section provides a snapshot of the characteristics of the local economy.

Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire both experienced a decline in population of 0.9% between 1991 and 2001. This compares to a rise of 2.6% nationally and 4.0% in the East Midlands. The area has a lower proportion of younger people and a higher proportion of older residents than the national average.

Overall economic performance (as measured by Gross Value Added per head of population) is only 73% of the regional average and 67% of the national average.

In 2002 there were 73,700 people employed in the area. North East Derbyshire has seen relatively strong employment growth over the last 10 years.

The area retains a high level of manufacturing employment, in spite of significant restructuring and job losses in traditional manufacturing sectors.

Chesterfield's employment in retail and wholesale distribution has increased by 50% since 1991, compared to a national average of 36%.

Both authorities are under-represented in financial and business services although Chesterfield has seen strong employment growth in business services over the last ten years (albeit from a relatively low base).

Tourism is a growing industry in North Eastern Derbyshire, with £135 million of visitor expenditure supporting an estimated 3,400 jobs in the retail, accommodation, catering, leisure and transport sectors.

Chesterfield has a high level of 'Business Enterprise', reflecting above average performance in business formation and survival rates.

In 2001, there were 93,000 economically active residents. Both districts have economic activity and employment rates below the national average, in part reflecting a high level of limiting long term illness amongst the local population.

Fewer people are employed in the higher skilled occupations (eg managers and professionals), whilst more people are employed in lower skill 'elementary' occupations.

Linked to the above, both Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire have considerably more people qualified below NVQ 2 (or without qualifications) than the national average. Conversely there are fewer people who are qualified to NVQ 4 and above.

In 2003 the % of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C was above the national average in the CHART area.

Unemployment has fallen significantly in recent years, but remains above the national average in Chesterfield.

The Indices of Deprivation 2004 rank Chesterfield as the 66th and North East Derbyshire the 157th most deprived districts in England (out of 354).

A more comprehensive review of the local economy is available as a separate document.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The economic analysis provides a review of the local economy and an indication of the trends which are likely to shape its future. A number of key issues are apparent:

The local economy has experienced a long and difficult period of structural change.

In 1981, the area employed over 30,000 people in the coalmining and manufacturing sectors. In 2002, this figure had reduced to 15,000. Coalmining has all but disappeared and many traditional manufacturing industries have either closed or significantly scaled back their operations.

The impact of this change is still evident.

Although the official unemployment claimant count has fallen consistently since 1993/4, a wider measure of 'employment deprivation' (including the claimant unemployed, those on New Deal schemes, and Incapacity Benefit recipients) provided by the Indices of Deprivation 2004, underlines the continuing human impact of the structural changes which have taken place. Based on 2001 figures, the Indices estimate that over 15,500 people of working age were classified as 'employment deprived' (compared to 4,300 claimant unemployed in 2001).

The economy continues to under-perform ...

The overall measure of economic performance, GVA (Gross Value Added), whilst showing signs of growth, remains significantly below the national and regional averages.

...and remains vulnerable to further structural change ...

Despite the restructuring that has already taken place, the local economy continues to be overly dependent on relatively low value added manufacturing sectors which are vulnerable to globalisation pressures.

Equally, the local economy is under-represented in knowledge driven employment sectors and consequently is not generating sufficient higher level employment opportunities that are potentially available to local people. There is a danger that the area will remain trapped in a low value, low wage, low skill cycle and that the population will continue to decline.

...but there are increasing grounds for optimism about the future.

North East Derbyshire District has increased overall employment by almost 20% since 1991, whilst Chesterfield has seen particular growth in the business services sector and retail employment in the town centre. Both districts have seen an increase in the number of manufacturing businesses compared to a national decline. In spite of global pressures on UK

manufacturing, it may be possible to sustain above average levels of manufacturing employment in the longer term, particularly if a move into higher value activities can be encouraged. This will need to be linked to an up-skilling of the workforce. The local economy is becoming more diverse (evidenced by the growth in employment in small firms) and Chesterfield benefits from a high level of business enterprise. Tourism is making an increasingly important contribution to the local economy and there is scope to further increase the level of tourism expenditure in North Eastern Derbyshire.

Challenges

In the light of the above, the area faces a number of specific 'challenges' in seeking to achieve the vision. The main aim is to raise the overall performance of the local economy (as measured by Gross Value Added per head) relative to the regional and national averages. A number of challenges contribute directly to this aim:

- Increasing the overall number of employment opportunities in the area.
- Raising the level of employment in higher value / higher wage business sectors.
- Addressing the issue of under employment amongst the working age population, especially in areas of deprivation.
- Strengthening the sub-regional service role of Chesterfield town centre.
- Increasing the overall level of visitor spend in the local economy.

Targets will be set for each of these challenges and these will act as 'headline' indicators in monitoring progress towards the vision (see Implementation and Monitoring). **Action will be required by a range of agencies to deliver against these headline indicators.**

SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis provides a summary evaluation of the area's strengths and weaknesses. It identifies the opportunities that can be built on, and the threats which need to be addressed, in order to improve economic performance and overall quality of life.

Strengths

North Eastern Derbyshire has a central location, within easy reach of a large population catchment.

Good accessibility to the strategic road and rail network.

Attractive countryside setting on the edge of the Peak District National Park.

Chesterfield town centre is an established retail, leisure and visitor destination.

Availability of small workspace units, including four innovation / business centres.

The area has a relatively large number of bed spaces.

High profile visitor attractions located nearby such as Chatsworth House, Hardwick Hall and Bolsover Castle.

Existing tourism product – Crooked Spire, Chesterfield Market, Renishaw Hall, walking trails, traditional events, etc.

Established inter-agency partnerships, for example the CHART Local Strategic Partnership.

Weaknesses

Image persists of an area of industrial decline, linked to highly visible brownfield site legacy on main routeways.

Lack of quality serviced employment sites available for immediate development.

Weak skills and qualifications profile of resident workforce.

Decline of smaller town centres.

Competition for investment from locations with higher level of financial incentives eg South Yorkshire.

The area has a low tourism profile and the product is less developed than towns such as Matlock, Bakewell and Buxton, which are traditionally perceived as the area's main tourist destinations.

Peak time traffic congestion on key routes around Chesterfield town centre. Most traffic passing through rather than stopping.

Opportunities

Expanding network of business / innovation centres acts as seedbed for growth of knowledge based sectors. Link to provision of 'move-on' accommodation.

Seek to maximise employment generating end uses on major brownfield sites in the A61 corridor (includes former Dema Glass, Donkins, Lavers, Avenue, and Bi-Waters sites).

The development of Markham Vale Business Park and associated energy / environmental technologies cluster .

Strengthen sub-regional service role (office, retail, leisure uses) of Chesterfield town centre, through the implementation of the Town Centre Masterplan.

Promote investment in smaller town centres to boost long term viability.

Establish a positive image for the area on the back of the new tourism brand.

Support further development of the area's tourism product and infrastructure.

Potential to attract businesses / key workers on basis of 'Quality of Life' offer.

Revitalisation of Chesterfield Market.

Diversification of evening economy in Chesterfield town centre.

Maximising the benefits of regional airports and development of new routes and carriers.

Threats

Lack of employment opportunity (particularly graduate level) leads to further population decline, principally amongst the younger working age population.

Manufacturing base remains vulnerable to globalisation pressures, particularly the eastwards expansion of the EU.

Growth of knowledge based sectors continues to favour established locations.

Perpetuation of a low value added / low wage / low skills equilibrium.

Increase in traffic congestion acts as a deterrent to investment.

Loss of European Objective 2 funding and Assisted Area status.

Decline of Chesterfield Market, reflecting national trend.

Increased international competition in tourism short break market.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Strategic Framework

This strategy links with regional priorities and the national policy framework to ensure a co-ordinated approach to service delivery within the strategic hierarchy. Amongst strategies and policies that will influence the area in the future, the following are particularly important:

The East Midlands Development Agency (emda) has revised the regional economic strategy entitled "Destination 2010". This new economic strategy aims to make the East Midlands one of Europe's Top 20 regions by this date.

Emda has also published "Destination East Midlands - The East Midlands Tourism Strategy 2003-2010". This strategy provides a blueprint for the industry, with the ambition that by 2010, tourism will be playing a significantly greater role in the prosperity of the East Midlands.

The Alliance Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership (SSP) Strategy "Prosperity Through Our People" has a principal objective to raise GDP by £1.5bn by 2010, whilst ensuring that the benefits of income growth are spread widely across all communities. The SSP are business-led and act to co-ordinate regeneration activity across the former North Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire Coalfield.

The Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has produced a Strategic Plan to guide the provision of all post-compulsory learning (except higher education). This aims to raise levels of participation and achievement in learning, as well as increasing the engagement of employers in workforce development.

The CHART LSP (Local Strategic Partnership) takes the lead role in preparing the Community Strategy for Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire. The Community Strategy covers a number of themes including economic regeneration. The Councils are closely involved with the work of the LSP and this has ensured a strategic fit between the Community Strategy's objectives and those contained in this Strategy.

Linked to the above, the County Council has produced a Community Strategy for Derbyshire as a whole. This contains a number of priorities including those linked to economic and community regeneration. The County Council is currently in the process of revising its Economic Development Strategy.

The Role of the Councils

The Local Government Act (2000) recognised the leadership role of local authorities in promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. In fulfilling this role, the two local Councils and County Council will deliver services directly and seek to influence the activities of other agencies in addressing the economic needs of the area. The Councils have developed

a number of 'core competencies' in relation to economic development and tourism, and actions within these areas will be the principal means by which they seek to address the challenges. Examples of core competencies include:

- The provision of serviced industrial sites, business units and managed workspace.
- Working with the private sector to secure major development schemes.
- Improving the infrastructure of the area.
- Marketing the area to attract visitors and inward investors.
- Providing an integrated tourist information service.
- Improving the quality of town centres.
- Delivering regeneration initiatives in some of the area's most disadvantaged communities.
- Securing financial resources for the area.

In addition to these areas of direct involvement, the Councils undertake other activities which also bring economic benefits to the area. These include: promoting balanced housing markets to support a range of household types and incomes; and the provision of sporting and cultural facilities which make the area an attractive location to live and work.

Policy Approach

Sites and Premises

In the light of on-going restructuring in the area's traditional industries, the provision of an appropriate sites and premises infrastructure will play a key role in achieving a larger and more balanced economy which offers a full range of employment opportunities for local people.

The Councils have encouraged the diversification of the area's manufacturing base through the development of a range of industrial premises. A number of workspace schemes have been constructed with a particular focus on smaller units to support start-up and early stage businesses (responsibility for the provision of grow-on space primarily rests with the private sector and agencies such as Priority Sites). The Councils will continue to monitor the requirements of these businesses and work with partners to ensure a sufficient supply of premises (including move-on accommodation) in the future.

North Eastern Derbyshire currently lacks a critical mass of those high value added business sectors which are likely to provide the basis of future employment growth and wealth creation. The Councils have sought to

address this issue through the development of a number of business and innovation centres. These include the Tapton Park and Dunston Innovation Centres in Chesterfield, and the Coney Green Business Centre and the Westthorpe Innovation Centre in North East Derbyshire. The County Council is also seeking to encourage the growth of the environmental economy through the development of the Markham Vale Environmental Technologies Innovation Centre (opening in 2005). The Councils will work closely together to ensure the impact of the emerging innovation centre network is maximised and that companies expanding out of the centres are retained in the area.

Whilst recognising the success of these initiatives, North Eastern Derbyshire remains under-represented in the wider business services sectors (of which the above activities form part) relative to the national average. There is a need for continued investment in a range of quality office accommodation if the area is to increase employment in these important growth sectors.

As the main urban centre in North Derbyshire, Chesterfield is well placed to act as a focus for the growth of business services. The development of the 'Chesterfield Gateway' (former Bryan Donkin site) will include 25,000 sq m of high quality office accommodation, a major addition to the area. The recently completed Chesterfield A61 Corridor Study highlights the potential of a number of former industrial sites to be redeveloped for mixed uses, including office based employment. In North East Derbyshire, development proposals for the Avenue and Clay Cross Works sites also include a significant element of office accommodation.

The Councils have played a key role in bringing forward serviced industrial sites for freehold sale, for example Ireland Industrial Estate, Dunston Technology Park, Westthorpe Fields Business Park, Holmewood Enterprise Zone and the current development of the Markham Vale Business Park. Many of the sites were 'brownfield' thus securing additional benefits in terms of environmental improvement and image enhancement. However there remains a number of derelict former industrial sites in the area (which are primarily in private sector ownership) and seeking to secure employment generating end uses for these sites is a policy priority for this strategy.

Infrastructure

The quality of an area's infrastructure is one of the main determinants of how competitive it will be as a business location and visitor destination. The Councils have an on-going programme of investment in infrastructure including: upgrading the road network and traffic management; visitor signage; CCTV and carparks provision; and streetscape improvements in town centres. Current projects include the provision of a new public interchange in Chesterfield town centre and the improvement of bus facilities in Clay Cross as part of the town centre redevelopment scheme.

Town Centres

Chesterfield Borough Council is a significant investor in Chesterfield town centre with an extensive retail and office portfolio, including the Market. The Borough Council is also a partner in the Chesterfield Town Centre Partnership, a private sector led group which aims to continuously develop and improve the unique image and attractiveness of Chesterfield as a thriving market town. A Town Centre Masterplan has been produced and this will guide the development of the town over the next ten years. The Masterplan includes a co-ordinated programme of short, medium and long term actions which the Council will be seeking to deliver in partnership with other agencies and the private sector.

North East Derbyshire District Council is working closely with emda and a private sector developer to deliver a major retail development in Clay Cross. The Council is also pursuing a number of smaller scale initiatives (in line with local development plans) in Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh in order to improve them as local retail centres.

Tourism Marketing

In order to enhance the region's competitive position and increase visitor spend, Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council, in conjunction with the District of Bolsover recently engaged a firm of consultants to work with key tourism stakeholders to develop a brand strategy for the area. The research indicated that the weaknesses of the area, as a tourist destination were; lack of identity, negative perceptions of the area due to the legacy of mining and perceived limited tourism product. Many people were still not aware of the area, indicating the continued need to raise the profile of the region.

The strengths of the area were identified as a location bordering on the Peak National Park and Chatsworth, the market town of Chesterfield with its "Crooked Spire" Church and the rolling countryside, dotted with sleepy villages and historic attractions.

The research concluded that the destination should be promoted as the "Peak District's Historic Border Country – Chesterfield and Bolsover".

All future destination marketing campaigns will use the brand to promote the key strengths of the area and to create a positive, consistent image through publications, advertisements, media coverage, websites, etc in the identified target markets. Opportunities to develop new consumer initiatives will be explored, for both domestic and inbound markets. The provision of coach parking facilities at the new public interchange will add value to the promotion of Chesterfield as a venue for group travellers and the continued development of events will raise the profile of the area and attract both day visitors and overnight stays.

Tourist Information Service

Chesterfield Borough Council operates a networked Tourist Information Centre (TIC), which, under a Service Level Agreement with North East Derbyshire, services tourism enquiries for the sub-region. The Centre acts as a focal point for visitor enquiries and as a first point of contact for information and advice for local tourism businesses. The staff have an important role to play as ambassadors for the “Peak District’s Historic Border Country”. They aim to provide a high quality, customer focused service to both visitors and local residents, through the provision of information and the sale of relevant goods and services.

The TIC is, however, just one element of the overall visitor information provision. A Destination Management System (DMS) was installed in the Centre, when it relocated to new premises in November 2002. The DMS is essentially a central database of all tourism providers – accommodation, places of interest, events, etc in the area, which is linked to similar systems in Information Centres throughout Derbyshire and the Peak District. Ultimately, this will link to a national system, - EnglandNet. The public has access to this information via the Chesterfield and Derbyshire Tourism websites and through the touch screen kiosks located in the area . The information content is managed by the TIC staff in partnership with the private sector.

Face-to-face contact provided at the TIC will remain an essential element in the provision of information to visitors and the promotion of the area. Ways of enhancing and extending this service will also be explored and developed.

The DMS and associated websites will have an increasingly important role to play in the future. The full engagement of stakeholders is essential if the benefits of the system are to be maximised.

Community Regeneration

The Councils and partners undertake a number of actions in supporting the delivery of regeneration initiatives within local communities. Much of the action is targeted at communities with the most needs. These include:

- Staveley where a Neighbourhood Management Project is being funded through the ODPM Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
- Clay Cross and Killamarsh supported by the District Council
- Holmewood, Dunston, Rother and Markham/Middlecroft supported by the County Council.

Typically these involve the employment of staff working with a local steering group to deliver local regeneration action. Much of this support is externally funded for a time limited period, often up to five years.

Both Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire Councils also provide a funding advice service to community groups throughout the area. This takes the form

of direct grant support, signposting groups to appropriate funding sources, as well as 'hands-on' assistance with the development of grant applications.

Both Councils will continue to provide support for community regeneration action, but how this support is delivered is likely to change. For example, North East Derbyshire has recently purchased an online grants database which external users access from the website.

The sustainability of targeted regeneration is an important issue as regeneration of communities takes longer than the time allowed by external funding. Consideration needs to be given to establishing development trusts with property assets under community ownership as a means of providing sustainability. This approach has been taken in Killamarsh and Eckington, and is one which merits consideration for other communities.

One of the issues arising from targeted regeneration is the lack of cross-departmental and agency working. The Staveley Neighbourhood Management Project is a specific attempt to address this issue. As the Community Forums and Neighbourhood Partnerships develop their activities, this may also have some impact on encouraging greater involvement.

The Role of Partners

Fundamental to the success of this strategy is the role of partner organisations. The Councils recognise the vital role played by other agencies and will work closely with them (particularly through the mechanism of the LSP) to ensure co-ordinated service delivery.

Actions by the Councils to increase employment in higher value business sectors will only be successful if supported by the actions of other agencies to raise the area's skills base. Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council and the main providers such as Chesterfield College will have a key role to play, not just in boosting higher level skills, but in raising the level of skills across the board. Actions to improve participation rates in training and education are also required if the issue of under-employment amongst the working age population is to be addressed. It is recognised that individuals face a range of potential barriers which can inhibit the take up of employment / training opportunities, and agencies such as Jobcentre Plus will have an important role to play in seeking to address these issues.

Derbyshire Chamber and Business Link provide a range of support services to companies and these will promote the growth of new service based sectors as well as assisting the manufacturing sector in making the move into higher value-added activities.

Improvements to road infrastructure and actions to ease road congestion are essential and primarily the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council. This has been identified as a key concern by businesses, particularly in relation to the main routes around Chesterfield town centre.

The Alliance SSP has a valuable role to play in helping bring local development schemes forward (by providing match funding for projects) and co-ordinating inward investment activities at the sub-regional level.

In terms of tourism, emda now has responsibility for the strategic development of tourism in the East Midlands. Emda has established East Midlands Tourism and is aiming to establish a Destination Management Partnership (DMP) for the Peak District and Derbyshire. The Councils' role within this evolving structure needs to be defined so that the local tourism industries' priorities are recognised.

It is acknowledged that whilst the role of all these agencies (and the Councils) is very much about improving the operating environment for business, ultimately it is the private sector that will have the biggest impact on the local economy through its investment and job creation decisions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A number of guiding principles underpin this Strategy:

Sustainability

Whilst the Strategy focuses on economic development, it is always with a view to promoting, or minimising any adverse impacts on, environmental well-being. Examples of sustainable development projects undertaken by the Councils include the reclamation of former colliery sites such as Ireland Colliery (Chesterfield) and Westthorpe Colliery (North East Derbyshire) to provide serviced industrial land. Future developments are likely to focus on the A61 Corridor where there are a number of brownfield sites capable of being redeveloped for a sustainable mix of employment, housing and leisure uses. Energy saving geo-thermal heating systems have also been installed in Dunston and Westthorpe Innovation Centres and the Tourist Information Centre. The improvement of bus facilities and the provision of coach parking at the new public interchange in Chesterfield will encourage greater use of public transport as an alternative to the car.

Equalities and Community Cohesion

In pursuit of their equal opportunities and community cohesion policies the Councils will seek to ensure that all sections of the community benefit from their economic development policies. Examples of projects which have focussed specifically on priority groups include the CHART Intermediate Labour Market Scheme which has targeted help at the long term unemployed in the area's most deprived wards. In North East Derbyshire, the Council has undertaken community based regeneration projects in Eckington, Clay Cross and Killamarsh. Chesterfield Borough Council is actively supporting the Staveley Neighbourhood Management Project through the development of workspace in an area badly effected by industrial restructuring. The Councils also seek to promote community cohesion through their grant schemes for voluntary and community groups.

Both Councils have a mix of female and ethnic minority owned businesses within their portfolio of business premises.

Quality of Services

The Councils seek to deliver a high quality service that is responsive to the needs of customers. A commitment to continuous service improvement means that we are always challenging the way services are delivered to see if they can be improved in the future. For example, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire have introduced a joint sites and premises property register in response to customer demand. The quality of our tourist information service was recognised nationally when Chesterfield's TIC won the Tourist Information Centre of the Year Award 2005.

Community Safety

Economic development activities have a role to play in addressing the community safety agenda. For example 'Secured by Design' principles are incorporated into the development of business premises and town centre improvements have helped to create safer environments by increasing footfall in certain locations. Funding assistance has also been secured for the provision of CCTV at Holmewood Enterprise Zone, Dunston Technology Park and in Clay Cross and Chesterfield town centres.

PROGRAMME AREAS AND OBJECTIVES

Our **vision** for North Eastern Derbyshire is that by 2015 we will be:

A competitive location, providing quality employment opportunities.

This vision will be achieved through a range of activities which can be grouped under four programme headings:

1. Encouraging Business Competitiveness and Growth
2. Attracting and Supporting Visitors and Investors
3. Developing Product and Infrastructure
4. Regenerating Communities

Each programme area is further defined by a series of programme objectives. Both the programme areas and objectives have a close strategic fit with those contained in the Economic Regeneration Theme of the Community Strategy.

1. Encouraging Business Competitiveness and Growth

1.1 Support measures which enhance the competitiveness and quality of local businesses, including sector specific initiatives.

1.2 Facilitate the growth of business start-ups through the direct provision of managed workspace.

1.3 Maintain and develop partnership working arrangements between public and private sector organisations.

2. Attracting and Supporting Visitors and Investors

2.1 Positively develop the area's image and undertake a range of marketing activities to attract visitors and investment to North Eastern Derbyshire.

2.2 Co-ordinate the delivery of an effective Tourist Information Service across North Eastern Derbyshire.

2.3 Organise and enable a range of events to raise the tourism profile of the area.

2.4 Provide a Land and Property Information Service to those companies seeking to locate to, or expand in, the area and ensure a seamless response to investor enquiries.

3. Developing Product and Infrastructure

3.1 Seek to secure a sufficient supply and range of serviced employment land and premises, including the redevelopment of major brownfield sites for new employment uses.

3.2 Strengthen the sub-regional service role of Chesterfield town centre and secure the future of the Market as a major attraction within the town.

3.3 Undertake measures to boost the attractiveness and viability of the area's smaller town centres.

3.4 Support the development of, and encourage investment in, the area's tourism product and infrastructure.

3.5 Seek to maximise external funding resources coming into the area.

4. Regenerating Communities

4.1 Support the development of initiatives which seek to tackle the regeneration needs of the area's most disadvantaged communities.

4.2 Work proactively to secure the aims and objectives of the local regeneration partnerships.

4.3 Work with partner organisations to raise educational attainment, participation rates and the level of skills amongst the local labour force.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Activities to achieve the programme objectives are set out in the accompanying Action Plan document. This will be updated on an annual basis.

The Action Plan will provide a basis for performance management through monitoring the delivery of activities and/or the achievement of specified targets.

In addition to service level measures of performance, overall progress will be measured against a number of headline indicators, linked to each of the challenges:

Raising the overall performance of the local economy

To improve the overall performance of the local economy relative to the regional and national average (as measured by GVA per head).

(2001 baseline – 73% of regional and 67% of the national average)

Increasing the overall number of employment opportunities in the area

Increase the overall number of employment opportunities in the area to 80,000 by 2015.

(2002 baseline - 73,700 jobs)

Raising the level of employment in higher value / higher wage business sectors

Raise the share of employment in higher value / higher wage business sectors to 15% by 2015.

(2002 baseline - 9.4%)

Addressing the issue of under employment amongst the working age population, especially in areas of deprivation

Raise the employment rate above the national average by 2015.

(Baseline CBC 69.7%, NEDDC 73.2%, National 74.6%)

Reduce by 20% the number of SOAs (Super Output Areas) in North Eastern Derbyshire classified as being in the most deprived 20% on the 'Employment Deprivation' measure.

(Baseline - 51 SOAs in North Eastern Derbyshire are currently classified as being in the most deprived 20% on the Employment Deprivation measure)

Strengthening the sub-regional service role of Chesterfield town centre

Increase in prime zone A high street rental levels in Chesterfield town centre.

(current baseline £65-70 sq ft)

Increasing the overall level of visitor spend in the local economy

A significant and real increase in the volume and value of tourism

(Derbyshire Local Authorities are currently working with East Midlands Tourism to develop a methodology to produce quantifiable targets)