



Sustainable Economic Development – North West Case Studies

Final Report agreed by
4NW Economic Development Group

June 2010

Regional Leaders Board

Foreword

The 4NW Economic Development Group (EDG) met as an advisory body to the 4NW Leaders Board on regional (and when relevant) sub-regional and local economic development issues between 2008-2010.

In particular, EDG provided a forum for officers and members to consider and develop sustainable economic development policies and practice, including sharing best practice via research and information gathering.

This document, developed on behalf of 4NW's Economic Development Group, aims to share useful information about examples within each sub-region of linking economic and sustainable development and in particular practical case study examples of achieving sustainable economic development.

The document will be shared with local authorities and partners in the North West to assist the development of sustainable economic development policies and practice.

I hope you find it both a useful and informative read.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Marks". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Cllr Ian Marks
Vice-Chair, 4NW & Leader, Warrington Borough Council

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1.0 Background to the study

On behalf of Economic Development Group, 4NW had previously commissioned a piece of research with the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership looking at sustainable economic development practices across local authorities in the North West. This was because the two had been, and partly remain, distinct activities operationally – and, in some cases, strategically – within authorities.

The research was undertaken by Manchester University's Institute for Political and Economic Governance and published in November 2008. Based on a survey of local authority economic and sustainable development officers in the North West, the research identified:

- the need to see sustainable economic development as a single concept, albeit one with many facets.
- a lack of awareness amongst economic and sustainable development officers about who does what well and what can be drawn from experiences outside their immediate authority context.
- the opportunity for EDG to play a key, supportive role in enabling authorities to ensure the region is at the forefront of approaches to sustainable economic change.

The study concluded by recommending that EDG look at how effective practice in economic and sustainable development is captured, broadcast, assimilated and acted upon - this is the basis for this report, (which the Centre for Local Economic Strategies - CLES - have provided background information towards).

1.1 Why this agenda matters

There are a number of clear and tangible reasons for local authorities across the North West to address this agenda and to begin to consider their own response to the issue. These include 2 key issues: the need to mitigate the costs (both financial and physical) of climate change; and the need to harness the economic opportunities of moving towards a low carbon economy.

'Future North West: Our Shared Priorities', which is currently being prepared by 4NW and NWDA, on behalf of a wide group of stakeholders, focuses on how **sustainable economic development** is delivered across the region, not only in land-use terms, but also through wider initiatives such as jobs, skills, and regeneration programmes and investment.

The purpose of *'Future North West: Our Shared Priorities'* is to set out a long term strategic framework for the North West which promotes **sustainable economic development** and contributes to **sustainable development**.

We define Sustainable Economic Development as:

“economic development that can be sustained and is within environmental limits, but also enhances the environment and social welfare, and avoids greater extremes in future economic cycles.”

2.0 The Case Studies

2.1 Cheshire and Warrington

2.1.1 Blacon Community Trust (W. Chester) – Sustainable Blacon Project

The Challenge

Blacon is a relatively deprived, largely residential area to the west of Chester. The Sustainable Blacon project led by [Blacon Community Trust](#) is attempting to decrease the carbon footprint of the area and increase overall sustainability through a series of joined up community focussed projects drawing on a range of local public, private and third sector partners.

Why

Blacon is aiming to achieve a sustainable community, while facing up to the challenges of climate change.

The community set up a charity - Blacon Community Trust – in 1984, but this has expanded in recent years to incorporate a series of projects being delivered through Sustainable Blacon Ltd.

Strategy

Sustainable Blacon Ltd is delivering a series of projects that cut across 4 key themes:

- Open spaces
- Transport
- Energy
- Social Enterprise

The area has implemented a series of projects linking physical and social regeneration, for example:

- Delivery of significant improvements to a central green space - delivered for community use.
- encouraging people to cycle more as part of the Cycle Chester programme
- re-establishment of a community furniture recycling project

The most recent success has been Sustainable Blacon's selection by the Department of Energy and Climate Change as one of the first 10 communities in the UK in its Low Carbon Communities Challenge.

Impact

The Low Carbon Communities Challenge programme in Blacon includes refurbishing two demonstration houses so people can see what they can do to cut their utility bills and access to this advice and practical support is available to all its 16,000 residents. Sustainable Blacon will reduce carbon emissions by enabling local people (many in fuel poverty) to cut a fifth off their heating and electricity bills. In an additional programme involving 150 households from across Blacon, people will have some of the latest technology installed in their homes to help cut bills.

This will be supported by a community events programme with many of the 150 households drawn from Blacon's community and faith groups to enhance its

effectiveness and ensure its development beyond the end of the Challenge programme. This has brought in significant investment from British Gas and further involvement from academic institutions.

Economic Sustainability (wider outcomes)

Areas of physical regeneration are being linked to environmental and wider sustainability issues. For example, Blacon Parade, an area of local retail shops, is being physically regenerated including via building a new community centre, units for small businesses and refurbishment of some residential properties.

As part of this process the physical build is meeting high environmental building standards and has had an energy survey, funded by NWDA, to maximise energy efficiency within the new build and also to explore the options for renewable energy technologies such as solar and ground source heat pumps. These will reduce the overall carbon impacts of the new and existing buildings and also contribute to cheaper running costs benefiting those businesses that set up in the new units.

The “joined up” approach being taken by Blacon also means that when funding becomes available the community is able to respond and take advantage of this as their holistic approach is attractive to funding bodies and demonstrates excellent partnership working.

2.1.2 Warrington Council and MEPC Birchwood Park - Travel Planning

The Challenge

The Birchwood area of Warrington includes 3 commercial areas including MEPC Birchwood Park where approximately 5000 people work in over 150 companies, Birchwood Shopping Centre, which includes a large Asda and other retail and office units, and Birchwood Boulevard, home to a number of large businesses including the Environment Agency. Although much good work has been done to date, the challenge remains to target single occupancy car commuters to switch to more sustainable methods, as well as providing information so that visitors to the site can also take advantage of alternatives to the car.

Why

Warrington is particularly susceptible to travel congestion which is exacerbated when there are extreme weather conditions or incidents on the nearby motorways that close swing bridges and the Thelwell viaduct – diverting traffic through Warrington town centre. The area is serviced by two motorways - the M62 and the M6. This stretch of the M6 is very busy, it is used by a large number of HGVs and there are frequent delays. Additionally the Birchwood Park junction of the M62 frequently has tailbacks on the motorway caused by excessive commuter traffic, again made worse when there are accidents. Finding solutions to reduce the number of vehicles is therefore important to the long term sustainability of the Birchwood area.

Strategy

Warrington Council’s economic development and transport departments supported the development of a sustainable travel plan in conjunction with MEPC Birchwood Park, Birchwood Forum and the Highways Agency. The Highways Agency also gave £10k towards the employment of a consultant to produce a Birchwood Area Travel Plan information pack for commuters, which is still available.

MEPC, the long term owner and manager of Birchwood Park, the largest mixed use business park in Birchwood, has a dedicated Travel Co-ordinator who runs a variety of campaigns throughout the year to encourage more sustainable travel to the companies located on their estate. The Travel Management Plan (in place since

2001) includes support for cyclists (via cycle parking, multiple shower/locker facilities and a Bike User Group of around 200 members), a free shuttle bus service from Birchwood railway station and the local shopping centre, and discounted bus passes for public service buses. Birchwood Park also has free cycle hire available during the working day, a dedicated Commuter Centre (containing local walking/cycling maps, timetables and travel information), an online car share scheme and a dedicated travel section on the Birchwood Park website:

<http://www.mepec.com/parklife/birchwoodpark/Travel/Introductiontotravel.aspx>

To further encourage green travel, Birchwood Park are investing in cycling and walking incentives throughout 2010. This includes development and refurbishment of shower and locker facilities, a cycle repair centre, and more cycle parking. There are also route plans being assessed for local walking maps, with support from Urban Walks, to further encourage walking.

Birchwood Park undertake regular brief Travel Snapshot surveys on an annual basis to assess modal shift, and undertake an in-depth Travel Survey every 5 years. The 2009 in-depth Travel Survey indicates single-car occupancy is now at 70%, a reduction of 12% since 2002.

The next challenge is to make sustainable transport a major focus of the planned BID (Business Improvement District) programme, which Warrington Council and Birchwood Forum is developing with Groundwork Cheshire utilising funding from the Council's economic development department and from CWEC's climate change programme.

The plan is to generate more awareness and encourage commuters to embrace a modal shift, for which the conditions already exist. There is already a dedicated Birchwood rail station with regular and frequent services; an exclusive shuttle bus from the station for Birchwood Park staff; regular public bus services from Warrington Borough Transport and an extensive pedestrian and cycle network.

Impact

Long term sustainability for the whole of the Birchwood site, through better travel planning and travel management, will ensure it remains competitive, highly considered for inward investment and attractive to businesses wishing to either remain or relocate to the area.

Economic Sustainability (wider outcomes)

Investment in Travel Management Plans (TMPs) and promotion of sustainable travel benefits ensure that the Birchwood area will remain an attractive area for development and a key employment site for the North West. Long term reduction of single occupancy car use and promotion of best practice TMPs, such as that at MEPC Birchwood Park, will further ensure that Birchwood is seen as a key economic centre and is considered a great place to work, live and progress.

2.2 Cumbria

2.2.1 Barrow Waterfront – Providing Sustainable Employment Land

The Challenge

To develop a high quality, sustainable business park that will meet the medium term employment land requirements of Barrow on the only remaining suitable brownfield land within the urban area of Barrow.

The 25ha site lies adjacent to the close knit community of Barrow Island, which is within the **10% of most deprived Wards in England**, (based on the Indices of Deprivation).

The land, which had previously been reclaimed from the sea and developed in the 19th Century, was surplus to the requirements of the Port presenting a real opportunity to build a business park in the heart of a community that had been heavily impacted by the structural decline in the Barrow economy.

The land was contaminated with insufficient load capacity and below potential flood levels. In addition it was **poorly serviced**, with a **road access through residential areas** and a utilities infrastructure inadequate to the needs of a modern day business park.

As much of the land was derelict and had remained undisturbed for some 40 years it had evolved into a rough grassland habitat, supporting viable populations of common lizards and slow worms.

The combination of all these factors together with a very sceptical local community who wanted the development and jobs but remained unconvinced that the proposals would be realised presented the Partners - Cumbria County Council, West Lakes Renaissance (URC), Barrow Borough Council and the North West Regional Development Agency - with a significant challenge particularly if it was to be delivered in a sustainable way.

Why

The main issues facing Barrow relate to **the long-standing dependency of the local economy on a few large employers and traditional industries**, and strategic weaknesses such as a declining population, issues of long term unemployment and high concentrations of deprivation. **To combat this, Barrow is increasingly aiming to compete in the identified high growth (GVA and job) sectors within the North West economy e.g. financial and business services and the low carbon energy industry.**

However, the lack of suitable and available employment land within the urban area was at risk of hampering economic regeneration.

Strategy

In order to strengthen and diversify Barrow's economy new employment opportunities needed to be created, which is in turn reliant on new employment sites. Barrow Waterfront is key to this.

Implementing a business park on the land at Barrow Waterfront has required careful planning and delivery involving a series of partners. Principal actions have included:

- Clean up of the site, with the Environment Agency monitoring environmental improvements in a best practice example used for other similar clean-up operations
- A significant effort has been made to maintain bio-diversity on site, including the creation of reptile habitats within a high quality business park environment. One of the innovative ways that this is being done is through the use of a reptile tunnel under the main business park access road. The tunnel

which is lighted and warmed by solar power ensures reptile connectivity across the site.

- One of the major concerns of the local community was the impact of traffic generated by the business park both in the long term as well as during the construction programme. In the short term the impact of traffic was significantly reduced by bringing in materials by sea and in the longer term by building a new access road to route traffic away from residential areas.

Impact

Main site work was completed in March 2010 and has created enabling infrastructure for a 7ha 1st phase business park that makes the best use of its location, with attractive public realm provision that reflects the maritime location. As well as having ready port access the site is easily accessed through a network of footpaths and cycleways that also provide wildlife corridors for the resident reptile population. The site also benefits from a new access road that removes port traffic which has increasingly blighted the adjacent residential streets.

In advance of their appointment the main contractor was required to demonstrate economic advantage to the town by **use of both the local supply chain wherever possible, and by employing local labour**. They were assessed on a monthly basis as one of the key performance indicators by the clients' project team. **To date, approximately half of the full time staff working on site are locally employed, and of the £20 million spent to date, approximately 25% has gone into the local economy.**

Wider Economic Impact.

To provide a catalyst to other development, Barrow Council have decided to take the lead in construction of units by proposing 60,000 Sq.ft² of mixed use buildings on part of the site.

Despite the current economic recession, in particular the downturn in the commercial property sector, prospects for Barrow are encouraging, with discussions on-going with interested companies.

A dedicated web site for Waterfront Business Park has now been set up:

http://www.waterfrontbarrowbp.com/waterfront_home.asp

This is achieving over 3 000 hits per month and over 100 specific queries for land have been received to date. Of these, several are serious contenders for new premises in the B1, B2, and B8 approved development categories including as follows:

- A local SME that manufactures sonar equipment for the offshore industry.
- 2 local branches of international companies, currently located elsewhere in Barrow, that provide equipment for the offshore industry.

Several large scale offshore wind farms are to be constructed near to Barrow off Walney Island, and the Waterfront Business Park is well placed to service these offshore developments.

2.2.2 **Sustainable Tourism at Langdale Leisure**

The Challenge

Cumbria's tourism sector operates in a highly competitive UK and international market and to remain competitive it needs to tackle the escalating fuel and transport costs of running a tourism business while responding to the challenges of climate change and environmental legislation.

Tourism in Cumbria relies on safeguarding and improving the iconic, high quality character of the Lake District's natural environment and landscape. However, simply badging an industry or tourist destination 'eco friendly' or 'low carbon' without ensuring environmental infrastructure is in place risks attracting accusations of 'greenwash.'

Langdale Leisure Ltd (www.langdale.co.uk), a holiday complex situated in the heart of the Lake District, is one progressive and ethically run business in Cumbria's tourism sector that is rising to the challenge of 'decoupling' economic growth from additional carbon emissions. The business makes an important contribution to the local economy employing 180 staff and comprising a 56 room hotel and 100 lodges and time share apartments.

Why

Cumbria recognises both the immediate financial benefit and also the long term imperative of developing a tourism industry that is sustainable. To achieve this, various local organisations provide support to Langdale Leisure and other businesses to improve environmental sustainability:

- the Lake District National Park Authority
- Cumbria Woodlands
- Cumbria Green Business Environment Network
- Tourism and Conservation Partnership
- Lancaster University Environment Centre

In Langdale Leisure's case, they believe lowering energy costs and sharing the ethos of environmental improvement with staff, customers and the local community provides a win-win model for increasing profitability. The company have committed to *"balance the day to day needs and quality of service for tourists, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural resources on which we all depend"*.

Strategy

To identify the best opportunities for making resource efficiency savings Langdale Leisure commissioned an environmental audit and a more detailed carbon footprint assessment. Building on these studies, Cumbria Woodlands, (a NFP company promoting sustainable management of woodlands inc. advising on the biomass supply chain) produced a detailed feasibility study into the potential use of biomass on-site. Its advice led Langdale Leisure to switch from LPG to woodchip biomass, bringing on-site woodland areas into active management.

This approach is in line with several recent Cumbrian economic reports which identify biomass as the most cost effective means of creating jobs within the emerging energy and environmental technology sector.

It also complements the work of Cumbria's Tourism and Conservation Partnership (recently renamed Nurture), which uses tourist business and tourist donations to improve and safeguard Cumbria's natural environment and tourism infrastructure. Langdale Leisure are also part of this partnership and have provided resources to improve the quality of footpaths onto the fells near their complex.

Impact

In detail, the existing fossil fuel LPG boilers on site were replaced with a 250KW carbon neutral biomass boiler. Key outputs include:

- use of a sustainable fuel source
- expected savings on energy bills of £35,000-£40,000p/a, with a 4 year payback period
- secured local jobs in the forestry sector
- led to improvements in woodland biodiversity
- estimated reduction of CO2 emissions p/a by 330 tonnes
- spurred action by the hotel to implement a range of complimentary sustainability measures

Economic Sustainability (wider outcomes).

Langdale Leisure's determination to deliver significant environmental improvements and to cut energy costs has been recognised and rewarded, with the company winning a series of sustainable tourism awards.

The success of Langdale Leisure Ltd's transition, over and above being an exemplar in its own right, also adds credibility to Cumbria Tourism's and the National Park's ambition to be able to market Cumbria as a genuine 'green destination.'

2.3 Liverpool City Region:

2.3.1 Halton Case Study: Castlefields Regeneration Programme

The Challenge

To regenerate the Castlefields neighbourhood of Runcorn.

Why

The residential neighbourhood of Castlefields, Runcorn was developed as part of the New Town Masterplan between 1968 and 1972 by the Runcorn Development Corporation to help alleviate overcrowding in Merseyside. At the time of its development, it was lauded as the future of sustainable living.

However, the 1980s saw a change in the fortunes of Castlefields with the area developing wide reaching environmental, economic and social problems leading to severe decline. In 2002 the Council formed the Castlefields Partnership and commissioned consultants to prepare a Masterplan to deliver the sustainable regeneration of the area.

Strategy

The Masterplan and accompanying action plan focused on creating a vibrant and sustainable community, delivering over 50 wide ranging projects embracing sustainable design and construction. This shared vision for the area has been guided by a high level partnership of Halton Borough Council, CDS Housing, Liverpool Housing Trust and the Homes and Communities Agency supported by a

dedicated programme team based within the Council to coordinate the work of the partners and champion the programmes delivery.

Key projects have included:

- demolition of problematic deck access flats
- provision of new high quality housing,
- infrastructure improvements,
- the creation of new public realm (Phoenix Park and the planned Village Square).

Impact

Since 2001 the area has been transformed. 883 deck access flats have been demolished with a further 128 scheduled by 2012. These have been replaced with 597 new homes, with a further 489 under construction or planned. At the heart of the housing renewal process is the desire to strengthen the existing community. This is being achieved through a complex process of new-build, followed by demolition and replacement, to allow people to remain on Castlefields. This process is facilitated through embracing off site methods of construction and 'lean' building procedures, which has helped reduce construction time by at least 40%.

Employing innovative construction methods has also helped ensure the provision of energy efficient homes with schemes achieving code for sustainable homes 3 and 4 and incorporating a range of measures including high performance windows, high levels of insulation, solar thermal panels and grey water systems.

During the shaping of the Castlefields Masterplan, the local community said there was not enough for young people to do within the local area. In response to this the vision for the area included provision of new youth facilities. These facilities have been delivered through the transformation of a redundant site into 'Phoenix Park', a 10 hectare youth activity park, which opened in June 2006 and is widely used.

At the heart of the reinvigorated neighbourhood, a new Village Square is planned. The Council has used its Compulsory Purchase powers to acquire the existing derelict local centre and is working with a development partner to transform the site into a new community hub containing a vibrant mix of shops, homes, community centre and health centre, all set around a public square.

A guiding principle for all new build housing has been that development should be of a human scale that enhances and integrates with its immediate environment. All new development has also been designed with community safety in mind. Housing renewal has been complemented by a comprehensive programme of infrastructure and public realm projects including: the removal of a dominant section of elevated Busway and its replacement with shared use access road; pedestrian and cyclist link improvements; subway closures and enhancements; and the implementation of strategies for public realm lighting and public art.

One of the main access points to Phoenix Park was via a dark and uninviting pedestrian subway. Following an art commission, this underpass has been transformed into a community art gallery with stainless steel mirrors in colourful frames, to bring the subway to life with natural light and continually changing reflections – the subway engages with people as they approach and walk through it and display community artwork.

Alongside this extensive programme a number of economic and employment initiatives are being delivered. These initiatives aim to tackle the cycle of low

educational attainment and worklessness on Castlefields. One strand has focussed on working age adults and has included the creation of a dedicated ‘Halton People into Jobs’ Employment Officer to operate within the Castlefields area.

A parallel strand seeks positive outcomes for young people, by raising their aspirations through a specific Castlefields Primary School version of the successful Enterprise Game concept. The aim of the Enterprise Game is to increase the aspirations of the local children, teach them about how the business world operates and highlight future career opportunities.

Economic sustainability (wider outcomes)

The transformation of Castlefields and the diversity of tenure proposed will ensure a sustainable, balanced community to support existing and new local services.

The expanded and improved cycle/ pedestrian network create better access to employment opportunities for the local community.

The holistic benefit of this initiative is that residents should feel better about their environment, their prospects and their opportunities, thus bringing this ward out of deprivation. Feedback is already very positive, but overall benefits can only be seen over time, when the whole programme of work is complete.

2.3.2 Knowsley Case Study: Housing Renewal

The Challenge

The housing stock in Knowsley is relatively modern, built between the 1950s and 1970s, and not all of it meets the Decent Home Standard. This presents a challenge to owner occupiers who otherwise cannot afford to repair or improve their dwellings.

This is because Knowsley has a significant amount of “no-concrete fines” housing stock i.e. housing that has single leaf, non-cavity walls, externally rendered in clinker / ash mortar. This causes other issues such as fuel poverty and winter illness, as well as the failing the Decent Home standard e.g. disrepair and modern facilities.

To address this challenge a joint “hard to heat” housing renewal project is running between Knowsley Housing Trust (KHT) and Knowsley Council. A Working Neighbourhood Fund allocated to KHT will be utilised to support housing grant assistance for owner-occupiers, along with additional contributions from the Council’s Housing Capital Programme.

Why

The Decent Home Standard sets targets for all housing to reach and is a key target in Knowsley Council’s Housing Strategy. The target applies to Social and Private Sector Housing. The majority of Knowsley’s Registered Social Landlords have brought their stock up to the standard, but there is still owner occupied housing stock failing the standard.

Strategy

The aim of the project is to work in partnership with KHT and to use their experience of bringing their stock up to the Decent Home Standard. KHT with support from the Council’s Housing Assistance Team, will through a competitive tendering process appoint a reputable contractor to carry out the external cladding and ensure communication with all stakeholders, e.g. owner occupiers.

KHT will insert a clause in the contract for the project to ensure that contractors look to maximise training opportunities, using a “Fusion21 Job pool”, to employ persons for a minimum twenty six week period. This will allow “trainees” to gain practical working experience and assist them into permanent employment, under KHT’s rigorous recruitment policy for trainees.

Impact

There are positive impacts on health, by increasing the amount of owner occupied housing brought up to the Decent Home Standard and by increasing opportunities in Knowsley’s job market and supporting the local economy.

Economic sustainability

The “fiscal sustainable” impact of the project is twofold, one to help create jobs for local people and future generations, e.g. families and off-spring. Second, to act as stimulus for capital investment in housing stock. Although the project targets only thirty properties, the lessons learned and opportunity to tackle the remaining, owner-occupied, hard to heat properties in Knowsley which is estimated as five thousand out of a total housing stock of sixty five thousand properties across all housing tenures, is an important consideration for future housing assistance schemes.

2.3.3 St Helens Case Study: Transport Linkages to Jobs

The challenge:

To assist people in deprived areas of St Helens to access work opportunities.

Why:

With approximately 19% of working age people on out of work benefits in the Borough, (higher than the North West and UK average), it is a Council priority to work effectively through partnership to raise economic prosperity.

The Council recognise that physical access to employment can be one of a range of barriers to employment and so they have put in place targeted and integrated support to overcome these and other barriers to employment.

Strategy:

Worklessness strategy in St Helens is focused on target areas and groups, using the 6 stage continuum (from engagement through to skills and career progression) detailed in the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy.

Impact:

Support has included:

- subsidising bus routes
- purchasing support from St.Helens Community Transport Initiative (SHIFT) and Neighbourhood Travel Team
- buying bus/train passes for the first few months of employment
- purchasing scooters and bicycles for jobseekers to loan for work purposes
- loaning people money to buy a bike/car in exceptional circumstances
- funding taxi journeys where no other option is available

Example 1: 920 Haydock Industrial Estate Bus

The 920 Haydock Industrial Estate bus service started in February 2007 as a direct result of concerns raised by companies relating to difficulties in recruitment and retention of staff especially those working a continental shift pattern.

The bus was routed through priority areas of St.Helens, which have the highest levels of worklessness, to try to both improve employment levels in these areas and assist Haydock companies to recruit locally.

The next phase is to look at a service to meet the needs of businesses who operate office hour shifts – with survey data showing around 1000 people entering and leaving the estate between 7.30 and 9.00 am and 4.30 and 6.00 pm.

The 920 service is also used by a number of longer serving staff and, since it has been in place, some companies on the industrial estate have reported a decline in employee lateness, especially at weekends.

Economic Sustainability:

The 920 bus service will continue to be monitored and developed through other possible extensions to the route and the timings of the services. Further research will be carried out to look at new developments in the Borough and their transport needs.

The Council's worklessness team will continue to work closely with the Neighbourhood Travel Team to distribute not only funding for travel passes, but also 'How to Get to' Guides.

2.4 Manchester City Region

2.4.1 The SMARTER Energy Efficiency Project in Manchester

The Challenge

Manchester City Council set out within its 'call to action' the development of a smart metering project as part of a range of initiatives to support the development of its Business Alliance.

In this current economic climate it is believed to be unlikely that private sector businesses will fully embrace climate change orientated projects without delivering to them a clear tangible financial benefit which would justify their involvement.

Why

The establishment of SMARTER amongst Small and Medium Sized Businesses (SME's) would establish the first 'Low Carbon Business Community' and this would demonstrate the cities commitment to the carbon reduction agenda and enhance its reputation outside of the Region and contribute towards its status as a Low Carbon Economic Area.

The Carbon Trust estimates that a single meter could cut a business's carbon emissions by up to 12%; on a cost per tonne basis this is significantly cheaper than that for onshore wind turbines. Achieving these savings will help Manchester's performance in relation to National Indicator 186 – Citywide CO₂ per capita.

The Carbon Trust concluded that on average the companies who took part in the smart metering trial saved over £1,000 a year on their energy bills. This will greatly assist SME's in becoming more financially sustainable.

Strategy

The SMARTER project is complimented by a European Union funded project (DEHEMS) looking at how technology can improve domestic energy efficiency.

DEHEMS provides real time energy use and emissions information direct to the user in a format that looks at the way in which the energy is used. It allows, by providing access to a web based platform, users to monitor and compare their own energy use over specific periods (e.g. this week compared with last week) together with allowing benchmarking amongst peer groups which encourages a competitive process which is key to delivering behaviour change.

It was decided to determine if there was an appetite for a DEHEMS project within Manchester and the Northern Quarter was identified as being a suitable study area due to the mix and nature of businesses in the area (bars, restaurants' hotels and offices). An initial study was therefore commissioned which concluded that, whilst understanding of what Smart Metering was is very limited and there was very little knowledge of the benefits that could be delivered, there was a clear appetite for a Project of this type once the benefits were explained to people.

Once the case for a Project was evident it was agreed that New Economy Manchester would apply for funding to deliver the Project. Funding was then sought and subsequently granted from the Carbon Innovation Fund and the Carbon Challenge Fund to support a project with a total cost of £250,000.

Impact

The SMARTER project splits into four key phases:

- Design and Scoping
- Business Recruitment
- Implementation and Analysis
- Dissemination of findings

Currently the project is at the business recruitment stage.

The project will eventually assist 100 businesses and 400 homes to reduce carbon emissions from their energy use by 12%, with a similar saving in energy spend. This will be achieved by encouraging 'Load Reduction' at peak times of the day – in preparation for the introduction of time specific tariffs; by 'Process Optimisation' a detailed review of how equipment is used – to encourage the use and acquisition of energy efficient equipment; and by 'Peak Usage Information' – which will demonstrate the total energy use and allow comparisons to be made with previous usage and those of business peer group averages.

Economic Sustainability

The proposed economic benefits from the project are apparent. The project will reduce energy costs for homeowners and businesses alike with the additional benefit of saving CO₂ emissions from the energy saved.

This will provide more financially sustainable businesses thereby safeguarding employment in the supported businesses.

The project is scalable and could be used to deliver benefits at both regional and national scale.

3.0 Discussion

Characteristics of sustainable economic development

The case studies vary in their nature and implementation, however there are common threads linking through them, characteristics which are important to successfully implement and embed the concept of sustainable economic development. These are:

- ❑ **Strong leadership support:** this is the most common theme linking the examples together. Leadership and vision has been shown from the highest levels of senior management and elected members, from whom without real determination and commitment many of the movements towards sustainable economic development would not be possible.
- ❑ **Dissemination to all staff:** strong leadership support and vision is clearly crucial in moving towards sustainable economic development, There is a lack of understanding of sustainable development within many councils and a lack of will to incorporate it into operational agendas. It is also important to include staff in the development of ideas and solutions, and ensuring there are sufficient numbers employed with the skills to carry the agenda forward.
- ❑ **Innovation:** Innovation is perhaps *the* key theme which links elements of best practice together – this can be structural innovation such as shifting working practices and operations within a council to ensure new sustainable economic development working practices are adhered to, or through practical innovation in terms of projects implemented.
- ❑ **Consistent cost/benefit analysis of projects before inception:** The need for this is becoming increasingly common as part of the bidding process for project funding. Successful bids will require cross-departmental skills and working to build a robust case for project funding.
- ❑ **Strong partnership arrangements:** The drive towards sustainable economic development involves the need to secure partnerships, often with those in the private sector in addition to working with Local Strategic Partnerships and social enterprises – this should also be viewed as an opportunity for local authorities in strengthening the local economy e.g. through job creation and training.

Tensions around sustainable economic development

In working to achieve sustainable economic development there is a need to recognise and openly discuss the tension inherent between sustainability and economic development. Part of this discussion is a recognition of the need to look at a wider range of issues than just traditional economic indicators; to move to considering the environmental and social issues explicit within the definition of 'sustainable economic development'.

Sustainable economic development will rely on enabling a more resilient economy, that will be both more local (e.g. supporting supply chain linkages) and continue to be global in outlook (to ensure continued economic competitiveness). Sustainable development and economic development are not irreconcilable, with local authorities and partner organisations having a key role to play in enabling a transition to a low carbon economy through sustainable economic development policy and practice.

3.1 Conclusions

The sustainable economic development agenda is now at the forefront of national, regional and local policy, and there is an imperative for local authorities in the North West to be actively considering how they plan to address this agenda. There are several reasons for this, such as the global need to tackle climate change, the costs and benefits to the economy, and the need to conform to statutory agreements and targets.

There is widespread evidence that in the North West, at the regional, sub-regional and local authority level, policy practitioners are considering the effects of climate change and are developing plans around incorporating sustainable economic development into their practices.

In addition to the above, there is another key element in the transition process towards sustainable economic development: the **power of public procurement on the local supply chain**. This is considerable and using it innovatively can help ensure that facets of the local economy are sustainable (e.g. stipulating the use of renewable energy and encouraging employment opportunities for local people in construction projects).

3.2 Acknowledgements

4NW would like to thank those local authorities and sub-regional partnerships who have provided case study examples of sustainable economic development from their area.

While not all the case study material provided has been able to be included in the final document, all of it has been reviewed by 4NW's Economic Development Group and included where appropriate.

The document builds on background information and research provided by CLES, working with 4NW, on identifying best practice in implementing sustainable economic development.

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