

Plan for growth – Invest in Bassetlaw

Summary

Bassetlaw District Council will work with the local business community to develop a 'place first' brand for Bassetlaw to position the district as an attractive place to work, invest, visit and live thereby increasing new business investment, increased visitor numbers and residents appreciation of the locality's distinctiveness. The initiative aims to drive the local economy and attract a minimum of 15 new businesses by June, 2015. Other key outcomes will include supporting at least 25 businesses through workshops and qualified business advisors.

The local economy

Bassetlaw is characterised by a low business stock, a low level of enterprise and a low level of business investment. Bassetlaw has roughly half the number of businesses compared to UK average. Self-employment is 6.7% against a UK average of 9.1%

Without an appropriate level of businesses, there is little competition and a lack of innovation and creativity. This low level of businesses is partially caused by low entrepreneurship stemming from a former heavy industrial base (coal mining) and a large rural area where land-based businesses dominate.

In order to change the economic prospects for Bassetlaw, to encourage new starts, encourage inward investment and start to grow GVA, Bassetlaw needs to be on the map.

Leading growth

Led by the local business community the objective is to create a place brand for Bassetlaw which will be used to position the district as an attractive place to work, invest, visit and live thereby increasing new business investment, increased visitor numbers and residents appreciation of the locality's distinctiveness. This project will shape Bassetlaw's future, attracting a minimum of **15 new businesses** by June 2015, helping to redress the current low business stock, low level of enterprise and low level of business investment into the area.

Following a successful European Regional Development Fund bid in 2013 Bassetlaw has helped establish a major regeneration initiative the "*Invest in North Nottinghamshire*" to put Bassetlaw on the map. The Invest in Bassetlaw project is timely in that there are a number of new organisations that have been established sharing similar ambitions and creating a strong community of interest. Retford Business Forum has been established as a community interest company; a new Worksop Civic Society was created in March 2012 and a district wide 'Pride in Bassetlaw' committee has been established. The Invest In Bassetlaw project will ensure that these new groups work with existing groups such as Retford Civic Society, North Notts Business Connections, Local Strategic Partnership, Retford B4B and Bassetlaw Business Focus to ensure a unified coordinated approach in the common aim of raising Bassetlaw's profile to the business world.

The plan

Using the expertise of specialist place marketing consultants we will create a place brand for Bassetlaw including a written proposition, key messages, and new visual identity. We will apply this branding to a range of printed materials, advertising, signage and website, engaging with the private sector to ensure the brand is adopted district-wide.

A second strand of this project is to host a series of business seminars, workshops and one to one business advice sessions to new business start-ups through a specifically appointed and trained Business Advisor, plugging a crucial gap that has been identified since Businesslink was wound up. 25 businesses would be assisted.

The 'place first' branding of Bassetlaw will drive the economy and shape its future, attracting a minimum of 15 new businesses by June 2015. To support this new business interest, a Business Advisor will assist 25 businesses to improve performance through face to face advice, seminars and workshops by June 2015

Results

- To literally place Bassetlaw on the map.
- To develop a strong 'place first' brand giving Bassetlaw a recognisable identity which will drive the economy, attract new businesses and create a platform to align marketing activity in the public and private sectors. By June 2015 we will have attracted 15 new businesses; rolled out the new identity through signage, marketing materials and an improved commercial website.
- To assist these new businesses attracted, we will appoint a trained and qualified Business Advisor who will support a minimum of 25 new businesses by running a series of 6 business events and seminars including Writing business plans; Marketing and Finance. These 1 day seminars will be supplemented by 'face to face' business mentoring, more than fulfilling the requirement of providing a minimum of 2 days (or 12 hours) support to each business.
- This project will stimulate and support new markets and provide resources to develop the economy within local communities.

The project will deliver a range of outcomes including safeguarding employment, raising the profile of Bassetlaw as a business base, improving Bassetlaw's commercial web presence and increasing the number of business enquiries and successful outcomes. It will benefit a wide range of existing businesses through increased promotion of the district. Presenting a story of positive change will assist developers wishing to attract new investors into the district with the ensuing benefits of an increase in commercial property stock, job creation and supply chain opportunities.

Broadband solutions

Given the pressing need of a number of rural businesses and communities for broadband provision and uncertainty as to whether the BDUK Better Broadband Programme for Nottinghamshire will provide coverage, Bassetlaw has stepped in and provided a microwave based solution. There are a number of businesses which have already subscribed to the scheme, these include Charcon Aggregates at Lound and Pollybell Farms at Gringley on the Hill. The Council are working with a number of parish councils

to provide a service to that community and are developing plans with a number of local communities.