



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

STRATEGY



Mutual Ventures working with West Lindsey District Council

Thriving Gainsborough 2024 – regeneration of the town centre to revitalise the economy and tackle economic deprivation

Mutual Ventures supported West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) to develop a strategy for regenerating Gainsborough town centre, and the successful application for a £10.3m grant from central government’s ‘Levelling Up Fund’.

Gainsborough is a historic market town in Lincolnshire that is economically and culturally left behind. Its market place is stagnant and suffer low footfall, shop and market stall vacancies are high, and it has no night-time economy. Its population experiences acute economic deprivation, with one ward ranked within the country’s 0.1% most deprived. WLDC had ambitious plans to support the inclusive growth and regeneration of the district’s communities, but lacked capacity and specialist expertise to realise them.

Our support

WLDC appointed Mutual Ventures to lead the development of the plans for Gainsborough and the application to the Levelling Up Fund, working closely with council colleagues. We were supported by our partners Project Centre to bring together a team with business case, strategy, public realm and economic regeneration expertise.

The strategy was developed together with the council and stakeholders, to ensure it was right for the whole community and would establish the physical, economic, social and environmental conditions required to address local challenges. It was widely consulted and secured the support of residents, local traders, the local MP, private investors, owners of heritage assets, and the Town Council.

The plan set out the need for investment in the construction of a cinema, redesign of the market place, refurbishment of heritage buildings and shop fronts, creation of a new park, and refurbishment of the bus station. It demonstrated how and why investment would act as a catalyst for clean economic growth, attract private investment and provide residents with employment and training opportunities. We undertook detailed economic modelling to identify the financial and non-financial benefits of the interventions and the measurable impact on communities.

Once the strategy was agreed, we ‘held the pen’ on the application to the Levelling Up Fund to translate them into a high-quality LUF application, which provided a compelling strategic narrative and clear delivery strategy. Through this we also supported the development of WLDC’s in-house capabilities, enabling them to develop their own high-quality bids for central government funding in the future.

Outcome of our work

WLDC learnt it had been successful in securing the full value of the grant for £10.3m requested in the bid. Work is now underway to implement the strategy and realise the benefits for local people, business and social enterprise, and Mutual Ventures is continuing to support the council.

“Investing in Mutual Ventures support has accelerated our wider place-making agenda and resulted in a high-quality case for investment in Gainsborough. Their inclusive approach helped this to become a real team effort and ensured significant corporate learning and buy-in of stakeholders to our plans.”

Sally Grindrod-Smith, Assistant Director Planning and Regeneration, West Lindsey District Council

For further information contact:

John Copps

Managing Consultant, Mutual Ventures

john@mutualventures.co.uk | 0203 714 3901 | www.mutualventures.co.uk