



meeting	<b>County Council</b>	
date	6 <sup>th</sup> April 2006	agenda item number

## **Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

### **Report for the period February - March 2006**

#### **Strategic Regeneration**

1. Officers in Regeneration Division have been successfully leading the process of negotiating stretch targets to be included in the Economic Development and Enterprise strand of the Local Area Agreement. These include targets on increasing the employment rate, supporting enterprise in communities and increasing the level of economic growth.
2. It has recently been confirmed that the joint bid for the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative by Ashfield, Bolsover and Mansfield Districts has been successful. The bid supported by the County Council, secured an initial £3.8 million to deliver a programme encouraging enterprise in some of our most disadvantaged communities.
3. On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2006 I attended a regional event focussing on two important government consultations that have recently been launched by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The first is seeking views on the indicators and building blocks to be used in drawing the new UK Assisted Areas map. This forms part of EU rules which set the limits on where and how much financial support can be given to firms to promote regional economic development. The Assisted Areas map determines the areas in which support can be given. It will be important for Nottinghamshire to retain as much of its Assisted Areas status as possible since it has been an important tool for economic development.
4. The second round of consultation centres on the draft National Strategic Reference Framework which will, when agreed, set out the priorities for, and allocation of, future Structural Fund resources in the UK. Even though the global Structural Fund receipt to the UK will halve from the current £11.7 billion (2000-2006) to around £6.1 billion (2007-2013), it is clear that a significant amount of funding (European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund) will still be available within the UK for the 2007 to 2013 period. It is important that

Nottinghamshire raises the issue that there is still a need for Structural Funds in parts of the county.

5. In the East Midlands, the interest is in the new Competitiveness and Employment Strand which replaces the current Objectives 2 and 3. These will no longer be targeted geographically but should address the key priorities of supporting the EU to increase its competitiveness and productivity and generate more and better jobs. Future funding to the region, which it is anticipated will be approximately £245m (2007 – 2013), is likely to be administered by Emda and be closely aligned to Regional Economic Strategy (RES) priorities. However, scope to align with other domestic initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Local Area Agreements is also mooted in the consultation.
6. On March 16th, I participated in the Nottinghamshire STARS 2006 Awards celebration. The STARS project is approaching the end of its two-year pilot phase and the County Council has been a key partner in this initiative. 'STARS' stands for 'skills, training, attitude, retention and service' and it aims to tackle a range of recruitment, retention and workforce development issues within the hospitality, tourism, culture and leisure sectors in Nottinghamshire. The STARS awards celebrate the work of individuals and organisations which have demonstrated excellence and innovation within the industry.
7. I have previously reported on the work of the Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR) partnership. Comprising senior representatives of this Council, of Ashfield, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood District Councils and of the Alliance SSP, the partnership continues to work together with its ambition to bring forward potential quality employment sites and to market the opportunities being made available as a consequence of the MARR's development. The partnership has commissioned various supportive reports which are usefully informing the partnership's focus over forthcoming months.

### **Community Regeneration**

8. My portfolio continues to offer support for social enterprise activity across the County. Projects working in some of our most disadvantaged communities in Mansfield, Eastwood, Langold and Carlton in Lindrick have been supported over recent weeks. The County Council's support has enabled the social enterprises concerned to better understand and manage their finances. As a consequence, this reduces their dependency upon County Council finances, provides the means whereby they can become sustainable in the longer term and allows them to better plan services in line with community expectations and needs.

## **Enterprise and Innovation**

9. I am pleased to report that our Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) to recruit 200 New Deal eligible people to the public sector of Nottinghamshire has been achieved. The 200 was split into two groups, 160 to be recruited by the County Council and our core partners - the Districts, Boroughs and the Fire and Police Service and the other 40 to be recruited by the "other" public sector of Nottinghamshire - most of these being by Jobcentre plus.
10. The County Council is responding to two important Green Papers, the first one being the long awaited Green Paper on Welfare Reform which, amongst other things, heralds fundamental changes to the rules around incapacity benefit. The second paper with some parallel proposals is focussed on reducing re-offending through skills and employment. We plan to seek views across the County Council and with some of our key partners over the next two months.
11. I attended the launch of the HIVE outreach project in the Mansfield i-centre on the 20th March 2006. This project is co-funded by Nottingham Trent University and the County Council and will support 40 embryonic pre-start and new innovative businesses over the next year through the Head Start programme, an intensive 12 week business mentoring course.
12. The Council is leading a new working group of innovation centre managers' from across the county. This group involves representatives from 30 centres to develop a delivery plan of support to innovative businesses, recognising centre managers' close contact with the innovative business community.
13. The Council's support for the Innovative Futures project concluded successfully in March with over 80 innovative businesses in North Nottinghamshire having received support for their business ideas over the last two years. The progress of the companies receiving support will be monitored to measure the impact it has on their productivity.

**Councillor Chris Winterton**  
**Cabinet Member for Regeneration**