



BASSETLAW
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

www.bassetlaw.gov.uk

Scrutiny is an Independent, Councillor-led Function, Working with Local People to Improve Services.

Foreword

There is no doubt that Britain is currently going through a difficult time socially and financially. The Pride in Bassetlaw Select Panel was created to capture what is great about our district and the people in the district. We wanted to hear about people and groups who are totally committed to our local area giving their time and often money to bringing about a needed transformation of their community.

However, we also wanted to hear about what detracts from pride in the district and what residents and representative groups want to change for the better. We wanted to know how to not just make Bassetlaw a better place to live, and with the government giving business rates to local authorities, we want to create a district that can do more business and attract business to the area.

This report includes many recommendations that were created through gathering our evidence and deciding on what we can do as a council but also as a greater cohesive community to make our district a better place, not just to live but to visit and to do business.

I am proud to have chaired this select panel and thank everyone who contributed. If we can action our recommendations together with residents and interested parties then Bassetlaw will be a greater district, with a greater sense of pride instilled within its residents and its workers.

I hope you find this report interesting and can see how it will benefit the Council and the district as a whole.

**Councillor Ian Campbell – Chair Select Panel 2
Pride in Bassetlaw**



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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Summary of Findings

Bassetlaw District Council's Select Panel 2 was tasked to review Pride in Bassetlaw as part of the Annual Programme of Work for 2011/12. The topic was approved by Overview and Scrutiny in June 2011.

The review addressed the ambitions of the Council's new Corporate Plan 2012-2015 as follows:

AMBITION 1 : ECONOMIC REGENERATION OF OUR DISTRICT

Priority 2 - Ensure Bassetlaw secures a high quality retail and leisure offer

AMBITION 3: INVOLVED COMMUNITIES AND LOCALITY WORKING

Priority 3 - Engage with people who live and work in the District

The Pride in Bassetlaw Select Panel wanted to generate a report on what instils pride within the district and more importantly what are the barriers and what detracts from pride. The Panel heard evidence from a wide range of community interests in Bassetlaw at the two one day events. The advantage of the events was that the Panel could focus on the theme for the day and concentrate intensely on the information that was presented. The Panel were impressed by the quality of the evidence that the witnesses presented and their commitment to the communities in Bassetlaw. The Panel commends their integrity and honesty and the time that they spent to attend the one day events. There were frank and open exchanges between witnesses and the Panel members which demonstrated their commitment and passion to ensure that Bassetlaw Council takes every opportunity to improve and promote community pride in Bassetlaw. The report does not go into lengthy detail of the evidence as we asked about pride which is an emotion and is personal to the individual. Often the same ideas were expressed but in a variety of ways so we have looked for the essence of the messages. The witnesses can be assured that their comments have been given measured and careful consideration and appropriate response.

This was supplemented by limited face to face surveys in Bassetlaw's four market towns of Harworth, Retford, Tuxford and Worksop and a written survey of Bassetlaw District Council Members and Parish Councils which were not statistically significant but provided a useful insight.

On reflection of the evidence common consistent issues emerged across both days which the recommendations of the review address. Some of the themes which arose were not anticipated from the set questions. The detailed evidence is available in a separate appendix. There was a consensus from all sections of the community on most of the key issues. The focus of the report is to take practical steps to promote, develop and improve pride in our local communities. One of the main recommendations is for the Council working with its partners to carry out an assessment of how well our community is working; how to encourage people to take part in society and the ways to achieve this. The information collected by this review will provide the evidence base and the Panel want the momentum to be maintained as there appears to be a willingness by all concerned to work together to improve pride in Bassetlaw.

What did emerge was that positively Bassetlaw has vitality, richness, culture and diversity- but it is hidden. The negative aspects are the pockets of poverty, low aspiration and employment opportunities and a poor quality environment in former industrial areas.

The Panel has defined Pride in Bassetlaw and recommended the use of the term Community Pride and not Civic Pride as it is more inclusive.

The evidence identified key messages about the barriers and what we can do to encourage Pride in Bassetlaw as follows:

- Lack of Identity for Bassetlaw
- A Bassetlaw District Council Logo that provides a geographical location for the district
- Communication both internal and external
- Importance of the leadership role of the Council
- Connecting to the rural areas
- Role of tourism
- Needs of business
- A quality Environment
- Role of the community and voluntary sector and volunteers

The Panel made recommendations to support and encourage pride in Bassetlaw.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for this review. This can be viewed at www.bassetlaw.gov.uk under the Equality Section or by contacting the Policy and Scrutiny Unit on 01909 533189.

1.2 Scope of the Review

The Topic was included in the Work Programme 2011/12 to address the following:

- There was a perception that Bassetlaw District Council's short, medium and long term plans are not well publicised and residents do not feel engaged with redevelopments and satisfaction levels with living in the area.
- The district has no sense of place. The position is unclear on the promotion of the District's heritage or marketing of the towns but need to assess the success of the Markets and the cinema in Worksop. We need a perspective on how to challenge the negative view of certain areas of the District such as Worksop.
- Also the role of Councillors needs a District wide approach for increasing Civic Pride.

Civic pride has many parts - economic development; planning policies; events; rural areas; the role of civic societies; working with partners; the role of Parish Councils and the role of the voluntary sector. Originally the review was scheduled to last only one day but the Select Panel was very keen to look at how pride could be developed and did not just want to review current activities. There were concerns that the Panel would not be able to consider all the evidence and make effective recommendations in just one day. Therefore it was agreed to hold the review over two days.

Also the review was originally titled Civic Pride in Worksop and Bassetlaw but after discussion it was decided that 'civic' as defined in the dictionary meant matters of the town and Bassetlaw is a rural district, so the term was not appropriate. Also the review specifically included Worksop in the title as Retford had an established Civic Society to promote pride in the town and Worksop did not. However, since the Scrutiny Work Programme was agreed in June 2011, a Civic Society has been established in Worksop in March 2012. It was agreed that the title should include all the communities in Bassetlaw including the towns and rural areas. Therefore the review was re - titled Pride in Bassetlaw.

The Panel produced the following as the scope of the review:

Our Ambition

- To define 'Pride' in Bassetlaw.
- To achieve a better understanding of what is happening in the District and the actions that the Council can take to support all sections of the community to move forward in developing Pride in Bassetlaw.

Our Scope

The proposed structure of the review was to have a themed approach to factors that contribute to a sense of community with a day event for each theme. It was agreed that the witnesses would give evidence on how we are performing currently and also look at best practice from other areas.

<u>Day One - Business Leisure and Tourism</u>	Covered the following themes: large scale economic development projects, gateways into the area and signage, Town Centres, the role of the business community, the physical environment in the district and the role of leisure and tourism and promoting the heritage of Bassetlaw
<u>Day Two - Community</u>	Covered the following themes: Rural Areas, Conservation Areas in Bassetlaw, the role of Civic Societies, the role of the voluntary sector, community engagement by Bassetlaw District Council and also its initiatives to promote pride in the workforce.

Who and how shall we consult?

Who	How
Residents of Bassetlaw	Nottinghamshire Listens Citizen's Panel Survey 2011/12
Residents of Bassetlaw	Stories about living in Bassetlaw
Residents of Bassetlaw	Attendance of interested residents at the one day events
Residents of Towns (Worksop, Retford, Tuxford and Harworth)	Survey of residents in 4 town centres
Parish Councils	Letter to gather information
Young People	Panel Chairman to discuss at March Youth Council
Role of BDC Civic Chairman	Letter to gather information
Notts CC Scrutiny Review on Tourism and Economic Regeneration	Report and Recommendations expected April 2012
BDC Scrutiny Review Attracting New Business to Rural Areas	Report and Recommendations due April/May 2012

What are the key outcomes?

A definition of Pride for Bassetlaw

A framework for Bassetlaw District Council and its partners to support Pride in Bassetlaw

Barriers to Pride in Bassetlaw identified

1.3 Membership

Councillor B. Barker

Councillor B. Bowles

Councillor Mrs V.A. Bowles

Councillor H. Burton

Councillor I. Campbell

Councillor D. Challinor

Councillor G. Freeman (for 1st meeting only)

Councillor C. Palmer

Councillor J. Potts (replaced Councillor G. Freeman)

Councillor J. Scott

Councillor K. Sutton

1.4 Summary of Recommendations

The key recommendations are in bold.

	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Financial Implications	Delivery Timescale	Risks to delivery/ Officer Comment
1.	That Bassetlaw District Council uses the evidence from this review to carry out a self - assessment of community engagement and participation in Bassetlaw using the model presented by Civic Voice to produce a set of actions to improve the sense of pride in the District.	Director of Corporate Services		December 2012	Agreed
2.	That the Director of Community Services reports back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the Invest in Bassetlaw ERDF bid.	Director of Community Services		December 2012	Risk is in the application being approved and contracted by DCLG in a timely manner. Not gaining the funding will severely curtail the activities.

	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Financial Implications	Delivery Timescale	Risks to delivery/ Officer Comment
3.	That Bassetlaw District Council produces a definitive logo in the future which is consistently applied and provides a geographical setting for the district by including North Nottinghamshire. The application of the logo should be monitored to ensure that it is used consistently	Director of Corporate Services/ Communications Manager	None unless the wider issue of branding is considered	December 2012	Early discussions have already taken place with the Leadership regarding the format of logos currently in use
4.	That the Director of Corporate Services determines an effective way to increase interdepartmental communication to assist co-ordination of pride activities and progress be reported within six months.	Director of Corporate Services		January 2013	The Director of Corporate Services will provide a briefing note on communications in six months time.
5.	That Bassetlaw District Council produces and maintains an up to date and interactive Events Calendar by i. Establishing a protocol for community groups, societies and business organisations to post their events on to Bassetlaw District Council website ii. Produce a checklist for Bassetlaw District	Director of Corporate Services	None	October 2012	The online events diary is being looked at as part of the transactional website scoping project. We are looking at a technological solution to allow groups to upload

	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Financial Implications	Delivery Timescale	Risks to delivery/ Officer Comment
	Council Officers to include checking their events for clashes and uploading details of events on to the Council's website				events, though there would need to be an administrator role to ensure appropriate content. This would have to be contained within current capacity.
6.	That the Bassetlaw District Council's Communications Manager reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the ways that the communication gap is being filled as Bassetlaw News is no longer produced.	Director of Corporate Services/ Communications Manager		November 2012	A report will be prepared by the Communications Manager and presented to a meeting of the committee to tie in with the scheduled work programme.
7.	That Bassetlaw District Council's IT and Access Sub Committee monitor the progress on the options for introducing a personalised welcome to the district for new residents with a paper based Welcome Pack and/or a computer based residents Log In.	Head of Revenues and Customer Services/ Manager Senior Support Services	Financial risk in implementing a mailing to 1000 new residents pa at a cost of £10 per pack including mailings via	March 2013	Revenues and Customer Services have to make 10-15 per cent savings in 2012/13 and there is not a budget for this.

	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Financial Implications	Delivery Timescale	Risks to delivery/ Officer Comment
			parcel force.		The Council's ICT Strategy development will include consideration of a customised approach to customer contact
8.	<p>That the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council fulfil their roles as community leaders by</p> <p>i. maintaining the highest public profile with a visible presence at events and meetings within the district and actively promoting Bassetlaw at every opportunity outside the district</p> <p>ii. the Chief Executive using the existing opportunity on the Council Meeting Agenda to report on activities that have contributed to pride in</p>	Chief Executive/Director Corporate Services		October 2012	The mechanism exists for a contribution by the Chairman and Chief Executive to inform the Council of events etc that they have attended. The Leader of the Council can speak subject to the approval of the Chairman. This could be considered at a future review of the Constitution.

	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Financial Implications	Delivery Timescale	Risks to delivery/ Officer Comment
	<p>Bassetlaw</p> <p>iii. and to use the existing mechanism to have a Leaders Report at the Council Meeting to report on activities that have contributed to pride in Bassetlaw</p>				
9.	<p>The ambassadorial role of the Bassetlaw District Council Civic Chairman in community engagement and promoting pride in the district should be utilised with a formal feedback and reporting mechanism to the Council as part of the on-going process to understand our communities.</p>	Director of Corporate Services		October 2012	The Council Constitution outlines the role and remit of the Chairman, matters for consideration by Council and it further clarifies the Rules of Procedure relating to Council meetings. Taking that into account the Chairman may make an announcement at the start of the agenda of ordinary

	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Financial Implications	Delivery Timescale	Risks to delivery/ Officer Comment
					meetings to include the promotion of public involvement in Council activities. There is no provision to formally report. Any changes would therefore have to be subject to amendments to the Constitution and ratified by full Council prior to introducing any revisions.
10.	That Bassetlaw District Council Support the initiatives of Human Resources to promote pride in the workforce.	Head of Human Resources	Funding to be met from within the existing training budget	Rolling Programme to March 2014	Insufficient training budget.
11.	That this report and the offer of support by the Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils (NALC) to engage with Parish Council's should be referred to Bassetlaw District Council's Parish Council Liaison Group to assist their review of future	Senior Manager Support Services		December 2012	Will be submitted to October Liaison Group meeting Submit to Bassetlaw NALC Branch

	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Financial Implications	Delivery Timescale	Risks to delivery/ Officer Comment
	relationships with rural areas.				
12.	That the profile of tourism in Bassetlaw should be given a higher priority by the Portfolio Holder for Community Prosperity.	Director of Community Services		May 2013	Working with local partners to promote Bassetlaw as a tourist location is a priority in the Corporate Plan 2012-15 – Ambition One Economic Regeneration of our District
13.	That Bassetlaw District Council works with businesses in Worksop to set up a Worksop Business Forum	Director of Community Services/Economic Development Manager	Nil: any activities can be funded from High Street Innovation fund	March 2013	Risk is the apathy of the Worksop business community to be involved
14	That Economic Development Unit work with business organisations in Bassetlaw to establish a protocol for Bassetlaw District Council member and officer representation at events and meetings and a quarterly report to Cabinet on progress.	Director of Community Services/Economic Development Manager		March 2013	There are 12 networking groups meeting every fortnight, every two months, plus awards, luncheon. All of them have a sign up process where you get

	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Financial Implications	Delivery Timescale	Risks to delivery/ Officer Comment
					information about the next meeting (although some of them are 'closed'- i.e. membership only.) If there is a subject of interest anyone can attend.
15	Bassetlaw District Council will continue to work in partnership with the Retford and Worksop Civic Societies to recognise national Civic Society Events such as the annual Civic Day to help improve Community Pride in the towns.	Director of Community Services/Economic Development Manager/ Planning Services		Ongoing	No protocol for dialogue with Worksop Civic society
16	Bassetlaw District Council will continue to work with the new Voluntary and Sector Community Forum to support the local involvement in communities and help them to develop a sense of pride in the area where they live.	Director of Corporate Services	To be included in the Service Level Agreement	Ongoing	The Council proactively supports the New Community and Voluntary Sector Forum established in late 2011. We will ensure that more elected members attend in the future.

2. Background

2.1 Definition of Pride

The Sustainable Communities Plan 2003 defines: "Sustainable communities as places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all. Basically a strong community is defined as "a place where people want to live and work, now and in the future".

In 2009 Central Government produced 'Guidance on building a local sense of belonging'¹ which set out the initiatives that make a strong community:

- Communicating the vision
- Using history, key events in the past and local memories
- Using geographical features and key buildings, parks and other symbols
- Using symbolic events – celebrations, festival, carnivals
- Using activities and shared interests – arts and culture, sport
- Welcoming new residents
- Using activities to promote empowerment

2.2 Examples of Local Pride Initiatives

The Panel looked at what was happening in other areas to increase pride:
Barry in Wales had a Pride in Barry campaign² and a Blue Plaque scheme to identify the houses of residents who had contributed significantly to Barry.

¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/senseofbelonging>

² www.prideinbarry.co.uk

They used the definition of “Pride in Barry is an association of voluntary organisations, local authorities and others who have combined together to strive to improve the local environment. The purpose of Pride in Barry is to increase civic awareness, promote environmental improvement and enhancement, and to generate a pride in the town. We believe that the Town of Barry is special: We want to keep it special for present and future generations.”

Stanley Town Council had funded a Civic Pride Officer which focused on the environmental aspects of pride.³

Barnsley Civic Trust was champions of Pride in Barnsley and has carried out initiatives to promote Barnsley and find out what its residents wanted in a Pride Survey⁴.

Locally Mansfield District Council had floral display sponsorship and Ashfield District Council had Awards for Achievers.

³ www.stanley-tc.gov.uk

⁴ www.barnsleycivictrust.org.uk

3. Method of Review

3.1 Summary of Review Meetings and External visits

Meeting	Witnesses	Evidence Gathered
1 st February 2012	Daniel Watson, Principal Economic Development Officer, BDC.	Scoping Exercise
16 th February 2012	None	To confirm the Scope of the Review and plan the structure of the one day events and draw up a witness list.
28 th March 2012 - Business , Tourism and Leisure	Ian Harvey, Civic Voice Jennifer Spencer , Experience Nottinghamshire Peter Clark, Leisure, BDC John Everitt, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Michael Tagg, Conservation Officer, BDC Robert Wilkinson - Economic Development, BDC Richard Blagg, Town Centres Manager, BDC Fiona Humpage, BDC Louise Copcutt, Retford Business Forum Mel Day, North Notts Business Connections Pam Barnsdale, Retford Civic Society Sue Allan, Historian and local business	The witnesses completed a set of Witness Questions prior to the day. The Panel heard evidence from a diverse range of witnesses who were all committed to pride in Bassetlaw. The witnesses were frank and open and there were constructive discussions with the Panel about the barriers to pride and the way forward. Common themes did emerge and the Panel gave careful consideration to the evidence in the recommendation process.

	<p>providing tours to visit historical Pilgrim Father sites Sam Glaswell, Bassetlaw Museum Ron Beare, local photographer and Sutton Parish Councillor Margaret Beare, Sutton Arts Group</p>	
10 th April 2012 - Community	<p>Derek Turner, Lord High Steward of Retford Rob Crowder Rural Communities Action Nottinghamshire (RCAN) Gordon Brown, Nottinghamshire Association Local Councils (NALC) Grace Painter, North Notts College Geraldine Pearce, BCVS Anne Cater, BCVS Len Hull, Human Resources, BDC Inspector Simon Pealing, Nottinghamshire Police, East Bassetlaw Father Nicolas Spicer, Priory Church, Worksop David Bean, Street Pastor Gillian Blenkinsop Corporate Development and Policy Manager Steve Brown, Senior Manager Support Services</p>	<p>The witnesses completed a set of Witness Questions prior to the day. The Panel heard evidence from a diverse range of witnesses who were all committed to pride in Bassetlaw. The witnesses were frank and open and there were constructive discussions with the Panel about the barriers to pride and the way forward. Common themes did emerge and the Panel gave careful consideration to the evidence in the recommendation process.</p>
23 rd April 2012	None	To decide the draft recommendations of the Review.

3.2 Review Process

The themed day review process was different from the traditional evening meetings with one or two witnesses. This meant that a large number of witnesses would be heard on a single day by the Panel so that they had an overview of the subject. The witnesses were also invited to attend and contribute to any of the other sessions so that they had an opportunity to gather information and gain a wider understanding. Each witness was asked to submit written answers before to a set of questions so that there was consistency in the information gathered by the Panel. On the day the Panel could question the witnesses in more detail.

Witness Questions

- How would you define Pride in the District?
- What is your perception of the image of Bassetlaw at the present time?
- What is your service/ organisation doing to encourage Pride in the District?
- Describe the positive and negative aspects of the District
- What are the barriers to Pride in the District and how can these be overcome?
- If there is one word or image that would describe Bassetlaw, what would it be?
- How should we as a Council positively promote the District?

Progress Update Reports

The planning of the events and monitoring of progress was the responsibility of the Chairman and Vice Chairman and the members of the Panel were kept informed by regular Progress Update Reports.

3.3 Consultation

Face to Face survey of residents in Harworth, Retford, Tuxford and Worksop

It was decided to have a small face to face survey with residents of the four market towns of Retford, Worksop, Harworth and Tuxford. Originally it was intended to ask a member of the public from each town completing the survey to attend the Community Day as a witness but there was a small response so it was not progressed.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman undertook the Programme of Surveys:

Retford Town Centre - Thursday 15th March, 2012, 10.30am to 11.30am

Worksop Town Centre - Friday 16th March, 2012, 9.15am to 10.15am

Harworth Town Centre - Monday 19th March, 2012, 9.15am to 10.15am

Tuxford Town Centre - Monday 19th March, 2012, 1.30pm to 2.30pm

A copy of the questionnaire is available at Appendix 1.

Summary of responses

Use these results with care as they were obtained from a very small sample of people with a limited age range. The majority of the respondents were over sixty years of age but all the age ranges were represented. The surveys were carried out on different days and at different times which affects the numbers and age range of people walking around. Retford and Worksop were surveyed on their market days. The respondents to the surveys did not answer all the questions so the number of responses varies for each question. The information is qualitative that is descriptive and is not statistically significant. It is a snap shot in time of people's views. However, there were some common themes in each community. It should be noted that people talked about their local community and not Bassetlaw. The people in the town centres were in general happy to be stopped to answer the questions and were mainly positive. Consistent phrases were friendly, rural, nice place to live and safe. People generally liked living in their local community and made suggestions on ways to improve it. Facilities for children and young people were a common theme. The positive comments that were gathered were in contrast to the negative image that is often perceived about the area. There were negative responses - often from people who did not want to be involved in

the survey such as “rubbish” and “nothing good about Bassetlaw”. The main things that people do not like about living in their community are the quality of shops, litter, transport and anti-social behaviour.

The table below sets out a summary table and the detailed analysis for each town centre is available in the Appendix.

QUESTION	RETFORD	WORKSOP	HARWORTH	TUXFORD
1.Top three things you like about living in Bassetlaw	Friendly/Sociable Not too big/countryside Shopping/markets/attractive town Total responses=23	Markets Always loved here/know people/ friendly Clean and nice Good transport/nearby amenities/Clumber Park Total responses=29	People are friendly/know each other/help each other Nice area Access to shops and families Total responses=33	Countryside/Clumber Park Good location Friendly/quiet/peaceful Total responses=20
2.Top three things you do not like about living in Bassetlaw	Cost of Parking/ lack of public toilets/shops closing and charity shops Total responses =15	Quality of Shops Litter/dirty streets Cars on Bridge Street/charity shops Total responses=28	Dog Fouling Litter Anti-Social Behaviour Changes to bus services April 2012 Total responses=30	Nothing for young people to do/ small amount of vandalism A variety of single comments including no transport in evenings, broadband speed, boarded up building in the centre Total responses=15
3. Three Main Features of Bassetlaw	Historic Rural Friendly Market Town Freedom/Peace and Safe Total responses=17	Clumber Park Good Access Market town No good features - lost everything Total responses=22	Access to and range of shops Rural – Clumber and Rufford Park Plenty of activities Total responses=23	All received a single comment including Good amenities, access to Lincoln and local towns, Sherwood Forest and low crime Total responses= 6
4. Three Main Changes to make a better place	More entertainment/facilities for young people	More High Street shops More places for children and young people/ ice rink	More visible policing More services for pensioners	More for young people/children A variety of single

	More Parking/Free Parking Total responses=14	or bowling Cleaner/litter/dog fouling Total responses=24	Better services such as a bank and petrol station Total responses=27	comments including road improvements in centre needed, state of paths, improved public transport and better shops Total responses=12
5. Phrase to describe Bassetlaw	Rural Pleasant Total responses=12	All answered with a different phrase including positives such as Home, pretty much perfect, wonderful and negatives no-one knows where Bassetlaw is and not as good as it used to be. Total responses=10	Nice Friendly Peaceful/idyllic Total responses=13	Not at all bad Very good Less historic than Lincoln Total responses=3

Views of Previous Civic Chairmen

We recognised that the Civic Chairman has a unique position in their year of office to understand what and how residents feel about living in Bassetlaw. They travel to every part of the district; meet a wide cross section of the residents and have conversations on many different subjects. Throughout the year they see examples Bassetlaw communities that are working well offer and that we could do better in our local area. The Civic Chairman meets with civic dignitaries from other local councils so that we can gain some insight into other local communities and also receive feedback from them about Bassetlaw.

A cross party selection of three past Civic Chairman - Councillors K. Bullivant, K. Sutton, F. Hart and the current Chairman D. Challinor were asked about their role.

Issues raised by ex Chairmen

- The people of Bassetlaw make it a wonderful place to live

- Doncaster Council has an At Home Day at the Mansion House where all the history and regalia is displayed. Why not use all the stored regalia for Worksop and Retford?
- Improved leadership and positive working together across all parties
- Worksop/Retford divide – feeling that urban areas are better treated including concerns about the Mayor of Retford role and the loss of the Worksop Mayor.

Survey of Bassetlaw District Council Councillors

The Panel also wanted to have the views of elected Members as they are ambassadors for their local community and the District. They have an important role in developing a sense of well being in the community and improving the way that residents feel about their local area.

QUESTION	RESPONSE
1.Top three things you like about living in Bassetlaw	Access to beautiful, open countryside/ village life/Clumber Park and Rufford Park Friendly People Good road/rail and airport links
2.Top three things you do not like about living in Bassetlaw	Dog Fouling/ fly tipping/people do not look after the environment Anti- Social Behaviour Lack of Facilities
3. Three Main Features of Bassetlaw	Open countryside/ rural living/ Clumber and other parks Quick Access
4. Three Main Changes to make a better place	Enforcement of littering and dog fouling More facilities for 12-17 year olds
5. Phrase to describe Bassetlaw	Wide range of comments including much to offer to be proud of, diverse and friendly, access to countryside

The responses to the survey were similar to the resident’s survey but there was a greater consensus on the best things about Bassetlaw such as the rural nature of Bassetlaw and its friendliness. The need to improve the quality of the environment was also an issue.

Survey of Parish Councils in Bassetlaw – (Appendix 2)

The Panel wrote to every Parish Council in Bassetlaw to have evidence of the rural perspective but there was a limited response and this may have been due to the timescale for responses as parish meetings do not take place every month or could indicate that there needs to be stronger engagement with rural communities.

Key points raised were:

Positive

- People take pride in their villages and give their time and expertise/active communities improving their environment and organising events to build community spirit
- Conservation Areas have been extended by Bassetlaw District Council to maintain the quality of the environment
- Rural countryside - Clumber Park and Idle Valley Nature Reserve
- Willingness to improve communication with the District Council

Barriers

- Bassetlaw has no focal point and is only a parliamentary constituency
- Geographic location of Bassetlaw on the border of many areas
- Retford/ Worksop divide
- Retford and Worksop are not parished
- Town/rural divide with decisions taken by Worksop based councillors that affect rural communities.
- Rich historical legacy with ducal estates and Pilgrim Fathers but lack of awareness locally and nationally
- Access- people in rural areas need a car to access services
- Need a more joined up approach with respect for local communities needs
- Connectivity to Bassetlaw takes time and there needs to be more active involvement with the County Council

Bassetlaw District Council Youth Council

Civic pride was discussed at the meeting on 17th March 2012. Young people felt unable to place themselves in the District and rather than refer to Bassetlaw they focused on their town and more specifically their local area. They did not really know

about the role of the Council and never had any involvement with the Council. This is an important observation and the Council and the community and voluntary sector should work on initiatives to include young people in their community.

Written Evidence

Nottinghamshire County Council- Scrutiny Review of Tourism and the Economy

Nottinghamshire County Council began a scrutiny review on Tourism and Economic Regeneration in September 2012. The review is finished and the final report and recommendations are being completed. A copy of the scope of the review is available at the Appendix 3. The aim of the review was to identify opportunities that will contribute to the economic impact of tourism in Nottinghamshire and to inform the development of a Destination Management Plan with Experience Nottinghamshire which promotes tourism in Nottinghamshire. Historically there has been a lack of investment in tourism infrastructure and Nottinghamshire under performs for visitor experience when compared to other parts of the country.

The outcome of the County Council review will be relevant to the Pride in Bassetlaw review and support the recommendations on tourism. Councillor V Bowles advised the Panel that she had been on a tour of the District organised by Nottinghamshire County Council as part of the evidence gathering exercise. The County Council is looking to raise the profile of North Nottinghamshire especially with the 400th Anniversary of the Pilgrim Fathers in 2020, who did not originate from Plymouth but Bassetlaw. Local people are often not aware of the USA connection and the possibility of American tourists visiting Bassetlaw. Sandra Withington, Development and Marketing Officer, Bassetlaw District Council, had conducted the tour to Scrooby, Chesterfield Canal and Babworth Church.

Scarborough Borough Council - Community Pride Steering Group

As stated on their website Scarborough Borough Council has a Civic Pride Mission Statement and its own Steering Group.⁵

The Borough Council's Civic Pride Steering Group, is chaired by an officer of the Council and supports and facilitates members of the local community to engender a sense of ownership and pride of place for the life and future of the Borough area. The Group encourages a good quality environment in the promotion of Civic Pride. It also promotes and encourages

⁵ www.scarborough.gov.uk

community projects and takes advantage of opportunities to promote events and activities in the Borough to assist economic growth.

The Panel were interested in the structure that Scarborough Council had put in place to promote pride in the area. Although it is a recognised tourist venue, the Council covers a diverse area with the resorts of Scarborough, Whitby and Filey and has a significant rural area. During the course of the review the group was renamed to Scarborough Council Community Pride Steering Group to reflect the fact that it includes all the communities.

The Panel received written evidence from the Chair of the Group. The group meets bi-monthly with three elected members; officers from relevant services (Environment, Economic Regeneration, Planning and Town Centre Manager); representatives of the voluntary sector including environment, culture and arts and the business community. The Group ensures that the Council is focused on Pride. It produces a community events schedule which informs everyone about what is happening in the Borough (see Appendix 4) and also works with the local newspaper with an annual award ceremony (the Big Thank You) to local community groups for their contribution. Scarborough has a very active voluntary sector with many friends groups (about 43 local groups) which support pride in the local community. Currently there are four new groups being established.

The Steering Group does not have a separate budget to fund projects but works by using existing Council resources; officer time in partnership with local community groups to promote pride in the local area.

Performance Data

Nottinghamshire Listens Citizens' Panel Survey carried out a survey of councils in Nottinghamshire including 384 Bassetlaw residents in November 2011 on Customer Satisfaction that provides some comparative data for the review. The questions asked about living in Bassetlaw, Bassetlaw News and how people would like to receive information from the Council⁶.

⁶ http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/about_us/consultations/consultation_engagement_proj/nottinghamshire_listens_citize.aspx

The questions relevant to this review identified the following:

QUESTION	BASSETLAW	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AVERAGE
Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the local area as a place to live	80% satisfied	83% satisfied
Agree/disagree that people from different backgrounds get on well together	56% agree	62% agree
Agree/disagree can influence decisions affecting the area	31% agree	36% agree
In the past 12 months how often have you given unpaid help to any group, club, organisation	52% given help	50% given help
How many hours spent doing voluntary activities in local community	34% up to 1 hour per week 4% more than 10 hours per week	31% 5%
Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the way Bassetlaw District Council runs things	43% satisfied	
Phrase to describe the way you speak about Bassetlaw District Council	19% advocate 34% critical 44% neutral	
How well informed does the Council keep residents informed about its services and benefits?	60% informed	
How much of the last Bassetlaw News did you read?	97%	
How informative is Bassetlaw News	69% informative	
What do you use to obtain information about local public services	48% BDC website	
How would you prefer to obtain information about local public services	30% website 29% leaflets through door	

These findings provide some limited statistical evidence to support the findings of the review but it was only a small sample of residents.

4. Addressing the Scope: Evidence Gathered for Recommendations

The key outcome of the review was to understand the nature of Pride in the District and what the Council and its partners could contribute to improve the sense of community.

4.1 Definition of Pride

The Panel contacted Civic Voice which is the national charity for the civic movement in England which aims to make places more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. It promotes civic pride⁷ Ian Harvey (Co-ordinator) at the organisation provided the keynote presentation which set the framework for the two day events.

The definition of civic pride is “*Civic pride is the pride felt by citizens about their street, neighbourhood, district, town and city.*”

And at the heart of this is

- A sense of shared values,
- A sense of belonging in the community
- An active involvement where you live.

People only get pride for a place through interacting with it. People only get a sense of belonging by interacting with others. In recent years the world we live in has changed and the opportunities to talk have reduced considerably. Building a sense of belonging is about a lot of little interactions that over time connect people to each other and develop a sense of pride or community spirit.

This can be achieved by a “people first” approach which means taking the time and trouble to understand concerns, aspirations and shortcomings of the local community so that the Council and its partners produce the appropriate physical,

⁷ <http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/about/>.

economic and social responses. Where confidence is low, as is the case in certain areas of Bassetlaw, all organisations need to work together to set out what can be achieved to encourage positive belief.

It has three elements:

- **Renewing Civic Pride**

Civic Voice identifies this as local achievements, local decisions and local action for the benefit of the individual, their community, and their local environment

- **Awareness and Education**

Local communities need people who are actively involved in their local community and feel that they can make a worthwhile contribution to its improvement. It is particularly important to try to persuade young people of the importance of getting involved. It should be a priority of Bassetlaw to raise awareness of the benefits of people caring about where they live as it will reduce the amount spent on litter and vandalism. Clean and tidy communities benefit visitors, businesses and residents and by working together can maintain and improve the living environment.

- **Working together**

By collecting positive stories, events and achievements, people can see all the good that is happening across Bassetlaw – of people being active and caring for where they live. It is important to raise the profile of civic pride and support the people who want to participate.

Possible Ways for Bassetlaw to achieve greater pride?

- Ask people – what do they like about Bassetlaw? What do they dislike? What can they do to make things better?
- Organise a town health check about what everyone thinks
- Civic League – run competitions for best garden, best street, and best shop front.
- Participate in civicwatch – ask people are they proud? Monitor this ward by ward
- Share success – find out what is going on across the area and celebrate it
- Build partnerships with local business and local groups – strong partnerships

- Giving people the opportunity to shape and influence local decision making.
- Supporting and helping to connect people in their own local community.

Ian Harvey produced a presentation which is available at Appendix 5 on Building a Civic Society. It outlined the role and growth of Civic Society from 1844 to present and the positive influence that they have on planning, public engagement, heritage and conservation. Not everyone is engaged in their local community and as reported in Section 3.3 only 31% of residents in Bassetlaw feel that they can influence decisions. There were discussions about the need to identify with the positive qualities in Bassetlaw and encourage active involvement in the community. The Panel identified the following pages of the presentation as significant to this review:

My Community

A checklist to describe how well communities are working

When Communities Work Badly	When Communities Work Well
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paternalistic government – doing things for not with citizens ▪ Complex, bureaucratic and difficult to understand processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizens drive community activity with government support ▪ Clear, simple processes enable community asset ownership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of civic leadership ▪ Networks are weak ▪ Leaders do not understand their communities ▪ Citizens feel disconnected from their leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaged, committed civic leadership ▪ Citizens know their civic leaders and leaders understand their communities ▪ Robust networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small, patchy, duplicative and impotent voluntary groups ▪ Success does not replicate or scale ▪ Initiatives are centrally driven and lack local leadership and inspiration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voluntary groups are active and growing in influence and role ▪ Resources are deployed against the right priorities ▪ Groups innovate, successes replicate and scale ▪ Citizens are members of multiple vibrant communities, both in participatory and leadership capacities ▪ Citizens are mutually inter-dependent and there is effective connection

The checklist included issues that had been raised in witness evidence such as leadership, do we know best, involvement of rural communities. There are community examples that are working such as Manton Community Garden, the role of the Churches in Bassetlaw, the BCVS list of Volunteers and the Directory for Older People. The Panel recognises the hard work and valuable contribution of voluntary support groups.

The Panel agreed that we need to have a baseline for the Bassetlaw community and recommended that Bassetlaw District Council should carry out an assessment using the witness evidence from this review. The Panel Members did not feel that they had the time or expertise to complete the assessment themselves and wanted practical meaningful solutions to be the outcome. The Panel were also aware that there are financial and budgetary constraints on the public and voluntary sector and the outcomes have to be realistic within the resources available. Many of the witnesses recognised that Council finances are tight but often only small amounts of money are required and working together in partnership can be very effective.

The “How we Can Achieve this” is a model for Bassetlaw to use to have improved social outcomes.

<p>More Participation in Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More opportunities for participation ▪ Increased community participation and volunteering ▪ Increased democratic participation ▪ Greater recognition of participation ▪ Increased support from ‘those that can’ for ‘those who can’t’ ▪ Greater mutual interdependence 	<p>Empowered, engaged citizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased well-being ▪ Reduced isolation ▪ Stronger social ties ▪ Greater self-reliance
<p>More effective groups (community empowerment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased activity, scale and scope in existing groups ▪ New groups and enterprises formed and scaled to address critical gaps ▪ Increased access to resources ▪ Increased leadership and support ▪ Increased innovation and replication ▪ Simpler, more effective processes to allow groups to form and run services 	<p>Connected groups and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ De-siloed communities ▪ Coordinated groups and activities

<p>More responsive institutions (service reform)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater localisation of decision making and delivery with less bureaucracy ▪ Increased democratic accountability ▪ Increased citizen-led design and delivery i.e. neighbourhood planning, participatory budget ▪ Civic leaders playing multiple roles ▪ Greater focus on the issues with longest payback 	<p>Productive, responsive institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More effective ▪ Increased trust
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The completed report should be reported to Bassetlaw District Council’s Cabinet. There is a strong partnership working history in Bassetlaw which helps to encourage pride. The report should also be considered by the Bassetlaw Local Strategic Partnership as all the community needs to work together to promote pride in the District.

The recommendation below represents the first stage in the “People First” approach so that the Council and its partners in the business, public and community and voluntary sector can put the necessary actions into place. It is important that we understand how we are perceived. To make progress there needs to be an honest assessment. There is a commitment and willingness by all partners to improve the quality of life in Bassetlaw. This should determine a strategic way forward. At the heart is a sense of shared values, of belonging in the community and of pride in our locality. We need to identify these values.

Recommendation:

That Bassetlaw District Council uses the evidence from this review to carry out a self - assessment of community engagement and participation in Bassetlaw using the model presented by Civic Voice to produce a set of actions to improve the sense of pride in the District.

The remainder of the report focuses on the key messages that emerged from the witness evidence and leading to practical outcomes to improve the sense of pride in the District. It is not comprehensive of all the issues raised.

4.2 To achieve a better understanding of what is happening in the District and the actions that the Council can take to support all sections of the community to move forward in developing Pride in Bassetlaw.

Community Pride

Bassetlaw is defined as a rural district and is one of the largest districts within the County of Nottinghamshire covering a third of the area (over 246 square miles). It has a population of 111,400 residents and includes four towns, Retford, Worksop, Harworth & Bircotes and Tuxford. There are 25 electable wards in the district and 68 parishes, many of which have their own Parish Council's.

It was evident from the witness and survey evidence that few people relate to Bassetlaw as a geographic entity but did relate to their local community. It also appeared that pride in the area is personal to the individual. The best way forward may be to view Bassetlaw as an umbrella covering a large number of communities and promote pride in local communities. The Panel also considered the example of Scarborough Borough Council, where Civic Pride has been given a high priority and recently changed to the term Community Pride. The Panel considered that Community Pride was more inclusive and representative of Bassetlaw.

The witness evidence showed that pride in an area is a personal view and it is an emotion. Typical answers include a sense of belonging; being part of its history; a feeling of satisfaction (refer to Section 3.3 Consultation 80% of residents are satisfied with the area); feeling positive; counter negative comments; respect for others; loyalty and identity to the area; caring; energy in the community to improve the environment; making people welcome (friendliness was a major comment in the town centre surveys) and celebrating success. The witnesses and surveys acknowledge that Bassetlaw is beautiful and picturesque but we do not promote it enough.

Bassetlaw District Council was created in 1974 by the merger of the boroughs of Worksop and Retford and the rural districts of Worksop and East Retford and as our survey evidence shows that there is little emotional attachment to Bassetlaw as a place. The image that people have of the area is also mixed. Witnesses identified that there is much to be proud of in the local community such as care and faith but there are significant numbers of people with little self - worth and low aspirations.

Apathy was a word used to describe the District but there were different perceptions for different areas. The Retford / Worksop divide was raised as an issue. Retford and the rural areas are perceived positively but the rural areas do feel that there is a lack of understanding about the problems of rural living. Worksop is often perceived less positively, characterised as an ex- coal mining and industrial town with pockets of deprivation which adversely affects the community. It has been argued that the three communities have little in common.

The decision of the Panel after considering the witness comments was not to make a recommendation on the Worksop/ Retford divide. Each town needs to celebrate and value its own identity as they each have their own history and culture. The Council should support all local communities in their initiatives to build community spirit. As all the communities are different the solutions and actions required in each community are different.

The Panel decided that the Bassetlaw definition of community pride should be “The pride felt by the local community about their street, neighbourhood, village, town and district”.

We will work on promoting a sense of shared values and belonging in the community and encourage people to be active where they live using the key messages identified in the review.

Key Messages

Identity of Bassetlaw

Geographical Location

It was clear from the evidence that Bassetlaw lacked a sense of collective identity and place. The evidence suggested that residents lacked an understanding of their connectedness to the wider district and only felt affiliation to their immediate local community. The name 'Bassetlaw' presents challenges as it does not include either of the District's main towns of Worksop and Retford. In fact there were several suggestions that Bassetlaw should change its name to Worksop and Retford District Council. Most people outside the area do not know where Bassetlaw is located. It is common for people to be asked where Bassetlaw is and have to provide some geographic reference to locate the area of the country. It does not appear on a map with its own identity and has extensive boundaries with other areas such as South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire. Several witnesses from the business community stated that this is a disadvantage. This is due to the fact that Bassetlaw is on the northern edge of Nottinghamshire and has Sheffield and Nottingham post codes, covers three phone books and has bus service providers from Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. Health services are provided in Sheffield and Doncaster. Generally residents do not look south to Nottingham and Nottinghamshire but north to South Yorkshire.

The long term aim is to develop a sense of place for Bassetlaw. There were comments about the need for signage on the borders of the district so that people are aware where they are geographically and the need to identify Bassetlaw. This was linked to how we promote the name of Bassetlaw and what it means historically. Perhaps there is a need for an educational role as many residents are unaware of the origins of the name in the ancient Danelaw and the history of the district including the Pilgrim Fathers. The district is often described as the Gateway to the Dukeries but the Panel were reminded that it is a destination in its own right.

This evidence suggested that place shaping is required and Bassetlaw District Council has submitted a bid for ERDF funding of £128,535 (£205,000 with BDCs contribution) to literally put Bassetlaw on the map using the expertise of specialist place marketing consultants. The project will create a place brand for Bassetlaw which will show the District as an attractive place to work, invest, visit and live. The Invest in Bassetlaw project will last for 3 years if it is approved and will include improved branded signage at key entry points to the District. The Panel were supportive of this project as it would provide funding at a time of limited finance in a key area promoting Bassetlaw. If the bid is not successful various organisations would continue to promote Bassetlaw but it would be less cost effective and co-ordinated. This bid is also referred to in Select Panel 3 – Attracting New Businesses to Rural Areas.

As it is an important bid the Panel wanted to monitor its progress and recommended that the outcome of the bid is reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an explanation of how the gap will be filled if it is not successful.

Recommendation:

That the Director of Community Services reports back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the Invest in Bassetlaw ERDF bid.

Bassetlaw District Council Logo

The Panel concluded that locating the district geographically is important and the Council's logo can provide a strong identifiable message. There was clear evidence that the existing logo should be improved to give the area a more positive image. Other local authorities created in 1974 which are not a name on the map have a similar problem. North Kesteven refers to "100 flourishing communities" so that people understand that it is a collection of towns and villages. There was a discussion about the need to strengthen the Bassetlaw logo and ensure that it is consistently applied. Renaming the district to Worksop and Retford Council was not an option but by including North Nottinghamshire on the logo it locates a general geographic area. The Panel were mindful of the cost of a total rebranding exercise. The Panel were aware of inconsistent and amended use of the existing logo and strongly recommended that an agreed logo is put in place as soon as possible which always uses North Nottinghamshire. The actual cost of producing a new logo can be met from existing budgets.

It was also suggested that we could have a strapline on the Council's e-mails locating Bassetlaw geographically and also using it to support events and tourism such as Pilgrim Fathers.

The Panel were informed that early discussions have taken place within the Leadership of the Council. Any changes could take place over a number of years to ease financial pressure on introducing a new logo.

Recommendation:

That Bassetlaw District Council produces a definitive logo in the future which is consistently applied and provides a geographical setting for the district by including North Nottinghamshire. The application of the logo should be monitored to ensure that it is used consistently.

Communication by Bassetlaw District Council

Although the review did not specifically include questions on communication, improving communication emerged from the witness evidence as a priority. It is not a question of just promoting the district. We need to celebrate the successes more visibly and highlight the diversity of the rural areas and towns.

Internal Communication

The witnesses gave examples where officers in Bassetlaw District Council do not seem to be communicating effectively between departments. There were also other examples where members were not aware of events taking place in their ward. The Council is perceived as working in 'silo' activities and the Panel agreed that this has to be changed.

There was a discussion about the Scarborough Council Community Pride Steering Group model referred to previously where the Group co-ordinates an Action Plan of all the events in the district. The Panel agreed that officers need to be more pro- active across all the Council on any activity that can be viewed as contributing to pride in the District but within the resources available a formal group may not be possible or necessary.

Some issues raised by witnesses were relatively simple to rectify such as referring to Bassetlaw Museum (not Retford Museum) which is important to give the sense of identity to Bassetlaw. The Panel suggested that the Council looks at the internal processes for sharing information and raises the awareness of all Bassetlaw District Council employees of the importance of communicating accurately and positively to strengthen pride in the local community.

Recommendation:

That the Director of Corporate Services determines an effective way to increase interdepartmental communication to assist co-ordination of pride activities and progress be reported within six months.

External Communication

Events Calendar

Several witnesses stated the need for an Events Calendar so that organisations across the District could co-ordinate events. It could allow people to collaborate on community events so that with limited finance available the maximum use is made of resources. Events are also important to encourage people into the town centres to take advantage of the new civic spaces and improve their image.

Bassetlaw District Council has an Events Diary⁸ on its website but there was little awareness amongst the witnesses. It was advertised to organisations in 2011 and information for the calendar can be sent to the Web Editor. It has been a limited success. If the Events Diary is to be successful a wide range of external organisations should contribute. The Panel believes that an Events Diary is important to encourage people to be active in the community and should be as comprehensive as possible and accessible to groups and organisations.

Recommendation:

That Bassetlaw District Council produces and maintains an up to date and interactive Events Calendar by:

- i. Establishing a protocol for community groups, societies and business organisations to post their events on to Bassetlaw District Council's website.
- ii. Produce a checklist for Bassetlaw District Council Officers to include checking their events for clashes and uploading details of events on to the Council's website.

Bassetlaw News

There was concern expressed by elected Members and witnesses that Bassetlaw News is no longer being produced by Bassetlaw District Council and a general lack of awareness of the decision as it was delivered to every household in Bassetlaw. This was part of a restructuring of the Communications Unit which made financial savings of £32,000. The

⁸ <http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/features/eventdiary.aspx>

Bassetlaw News was a good initiative as it informed our residents about the area. It was positive and helped encourage a sense of community. The resident survey in Section 3 also provided positive evidence and support for the paper.

Other ways of communicating were discussed by the Panel including the website but the demographics of Bassetlaw are that it is an ageing population, who may not have access to the internet and would prefer a leaflet (refer to the survey in Section 3) Also there are areas of Bassetlaw that do not receive Broadband. The Panel suggested that we could link into existing community newsletters such as Retford Life and Worksop Life or use space in the County Newspaper.

Witnesses commented that we should improve engagement with residents and listen to their needs. The Communications Unit at Bassetlaw District Council has developed a programme of consultation and engagement projects to engage with all the communities in Bassetlaw⁹. Other methods used to gather information from residents include face to face meetings; written consultations; events such as Plugged to talk to young people; engagement with older people and those in rural areas; using social media and the introduction of the Bassetlaw App. This general approach has been successful as the recent consultation on Site Allocations in Bassetlaw by Planning Services received 15,000 responses. The Council also uses a Citizens' Panel and they have not been asked a specific question on Pride in Bassetlaw previously but this could be included in a future survey to provide evidence of any changes in the sense of community in the District.

The Communications Unit also issues press releases to local newspapers and radio. Witnesses raised the issue of local press coverage in Worksop and the need to work to improve this as it is perceived to have a negative effect on the town's reputation. It was noted that the Editor of the Worksop Guardian is the Chairman of the newly formed Worksop Civic Society. The Council should continue to make the most of the opportunities available in local newspapers to encourage people to feel part of their local community. Recently there have been positive local radio features about Bassetlaw on the relocation of Worksop market and the Torch Relay for the Bassetlaw Games.

There are many facts about Bassetlaw that many people do not know such as the stone to build the Houses of Parliament was sent by canal from this area; liquorice growing; the Carlton bicycle; Worksop Chair and the coal used on the famous Mallard steam engine also came from Harworth. The Panel suggested that we could produce a booklet of stories about the area. We could use the local media to ask for people's stories about their lives. The Panel saw pictures of the District fifty years ago which was a different society compared to today especially no litter on the streets.

⁹ http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/about_us/consultations/consultation_engagement_proj.aspx

As communication emerged as a key message from the review the Panel wanted a more detailed explanation of the ways that Bassetlaw District Council is promoting the positive news in Bassetlaw and this should be a separate report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

That the Bassetlaw District Council's Communications Manager reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the ways that the communication gap is being filled as Bassetlaw News is no longer produced.

Welcome To Bassetlaw

Residents are not always aware of which services Bassetlaw District Council provides and which services Nottinghamshire County Council provides. The idea of a paper based welcome pack to be provided to every new resident to Bassetlaw has been considered as an option for several years as it would help people identify with the District. Little progress has been made due to the availability of finance. It is estimated that 1,000 copies would be needed each year costing £10 per pack. This is a sound initiative but apart from the Council Tax information the Communications Unit may need to produce the information and may not have the resources. As a means of funding the pack the Council could consider sponsorship. This could be the longer term aim.

Currently the viable option is to provide an on line facility on the Bassetlaw website and new residents could be guided to a dedicated page of information. The IT and Access Sub Committee are looking into a Residents Log In when registering for Council Tax and this may offer the possibility of a more personalised approach.

The written evidence from Sutton cum Lound explained that they have an informal welcome party of volunteers that welcomes all new residents to the village. Could Councillors welcome new residents moving into their ward in their role as ambassadors of the community? This may not be possible in large urban communities.

The Panel wanted the Council to take an innovative approach and explore the options for introducing a Welcome Pack for new residents to Bassetlaw.

Recommendation:

That Bassetlaw District Council's IT and Access Sub Committee monitor the progress on the options for introducing a personalised welcome to the district for new residents with a paper based Welcome Pack and/or a computer based residents Log

Leadership Role of the Council

Elected Leadership of the Council and Chief Executive and Senior Officers

There was a perception that there was a lack of visibility of leaders at a senior officer and Member level within the Council. This was stated by witnesses on both days of the review. It appeared from the evidence that the community does look to the Council to provide a strategic leadership role in representing the community. The strong message was that the community wanted visible leadership that was speaking up for the district at all levels – at a County level and with strategic external partners such as the Local Enterprise Partnerships. It was felt that the Council should be forward thinking as we can influence future events and looking to the past is negative. Members and officers should promote Bassetlaw at every opportunity.

The leadership role can be strengthened by being more accessible as it was perceived that there was some lack of awareness of local community concerns. There is also a need to increase the level of trust. There were comments about the use made of community consultation in the decision making process and in the residents survey there was a low response to involvement in the decision making process (refer to Section 3).

The Panel restated the need for all elected Members to maintain a good standard of behaviour in public life and to show that they work together for the benefit of all residents and the business community. Members should be constructive and involved in community life and in the work of the Council. Any political “in – fighting” does not encourage pride in the district. The Panel confirmed that the aim of the elected Council is to provide services for the people of Bassetlaw and to represent the residents so that they inspire confidence and create a sense that we are all working together to improve the District. This action will in turn increase pride in the area.

It was commented that Members work well in a non-political way in Scrutiny Panels. The role of all Councillors and Officers is to act as ambassadors for Bassetlaw. Elected members need to be aware of their role as ambassadors in their local ward; this does not require a budget and this can have a positive impact on residents, the local business community and voluntary and community groups when they are involved in local events.

The Panel agreed that we needed highly visible positive leadership which focuses on the good things that are happening in Bassetlaw and provides strategic direction for the community. It was suggested that we have an annual **State of the District event where the elected Leader and Chief Executive together could explain what is going well in Bassetlaw.**

There is an existing mechanism in place at the quarterly Council meeting which allows the Chief Executive to communicate information to the Members. The Leader of the Council can also communicate information with the agreement of the Chairman of the Council. The Leader and Chief Executive could use this as an opportunity to report on activities that have contributed to pride. There is no provision to formally report. Any changes would therefore have to be subject to amendments to the Constitution and ratified by full Council prior to introducing any revisions.

Therefore the Panel agreed a recommendation to improve and support the leadership role with residents and partners so that the community can be proud of their democratic representatives.

Recommendation:

That the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council fulfil their roles as community leaders by:-

- i. maintaining the highest public profile with a visible presence at events and meetings within the district and actively promoting Bassetlaw at every opportunity outside the district**
- ii. the Chief Executive using the existing opportunity on the Council Meeting Agenda to report on activities that have contributed to pride in Bassetlaw**
- iii. and to use the existing mechanism to have a Leaders Report at the Council Meeting to report on activities that have contributed to pride in Bassetlaw**

Role of the Civic Chairman

There was a discussion about the role of the Civic Chairman who during the year attends many functions across the district as a non-political representative of the Council. The Civic Chairman has many conversations with our diverse communities and gains an insight into the pride that they have for their community. The Civic Chairman also has the opportunity to raise the profile of Bassetlaw within these communities and outside the District. The Panel stated that the Civic Chairman role could be involved in community engagement to promote pride in local communities. The information that the Chairman gathers on how well local communities are working together is not formally recorded and the Panel wanted improved reporting procedures put in place so that there is an opportunity to give feedback to the Council. This information can link to the ongoing process to improve service delivery and well being. Currently the Chairman can report to the Council meeting and this can be used as an opportunity to include activities on pride but the Panel wanted to look at other options. There is no provision to formally report. Any changes would therefore have to be subject to amendments to the Constitution and ratified by full Council prior to introducing any revisions.

Recommendation:

The ambassadorial role of the Bassetlaw District Council Civic Chairman in community engagement and promoting pride in the district should be utilised with a formal feedback and reporting mechanism to the Council as part of the on-going process to understand our communities.

Bassetlaw District Council Workforce

All the employees of Bassetlaw District Council are also ambassadors for the Council as residents see them on a daily basis. They have a visible presence especially in the frontline services such as bin collection. Employee's actions reflect on the Council and it is important that the workforce has pride in their work and the District. They are our biggest asset. Human Resources are undertaking initiatives to support a positive approach. When our staff are asked what they do for a living the Council wants the staff to be proud to say they work for the Council. This initiative is important as some witnesses had negative experiences and we need to be responsive to our customers needs. Interestingly in recent surveys there is a lower

satisfaction rating with the Council than the individual services which perform highly so people are satisfied with the services that our workforce delivers.

Bassetlaw District Council has launched a new Corporate Plan in March 2012. The Council's current set of values are positive; responsible; innovative; decisive and extraordinary. Together they spell PRIDE. The Council has proposed a future work programme to have a two way conversation with its employees to ensure that they are working to deliver the strategic values and engage positively with residents. The Panel supported this initiative.

Recommendation:

That Bassetlaw District Council Support the initiatives of Human Resources to promote pride in the workforce.

Rural Areas

Relationship with Bassetlaw District Council

Rural areas were identified as an asset to the District and many comments were made on the attractive, beautiful, green countryside. It also has a number of diverse rural businesses from engineering firms to tourist accommodation which contribute to the economic health of the district.

There are many initiatives in the rural villages to promote pride such as bulb planting; painting; fencing and signage. Bassetlaw has a Rural Officer employed by Rural Action Nottinghamshire (RCAN) who works with our rural communities to encourage people to value and be proud of their area. Parishes are in the main forward thinking and optimistic and have a 'can do' attitude towards problems. There are some examples where Parishes derive benefits from working together. Some of the outer lying rural settlements do not feel a loyalty to Bassetlaw as they feel more affiliated to other districts and larger towns outside of the Bassetlaw District such as Gainsborough, Doncaster, and Sheffield.

Most of our Parishes are in the rural areas and there is a perception within these communities that the only places that matter to the Council are Worksop and Retford. It was also perceived that there is a lack encouragement by the Council for Parishes to be involved in events which could foster community involvement and sense of identity linked with Bassetlaw.

There is also a perception that the Parish Councils are not being treated fairly. It was reported that Parishes believe that the District Council has not dealt with the issue of Double Taxation and the Concurrent Grant.

There was a discussion on the role of Parish and Town Councils under the Localism Act. Nottinghamshire County Council had been meeting with rural communities in Bassetlaw such as Harworth Town Council. Bassetlaw District Council could work more closely with Parishes in delivering local services and the Localism Act gives opportunities to do this.

There were concerns that Bassetlaw District Council Corporate Plan 2012 to 2015 has two priorities in rural areas. These are Ambition 3: Involved Communities and Locality Working - the establishment of a Rural Conference and working with local communities including Parish Councils to produce Neighbourhood Plans. The Rural Conference is being developed to gather key information on the key issues affecting rural areas as a possible pre-cursor to a rural action plan for Bassetlaw. This is seen as an important development for the District. However, there are other initiatives taking place. The Council has shown its commitment to rural areas by recently appointing an elected Member as a Rural Ambassador.

There was a discussion on the need for the Council to work with representatives of the rural areas for the benefit of everyone. Some rural witnesses felt disconnected from Bassetlaw District Council and identified that we needed to establish better communication links with Parish Councils. It was agreed that Bassetlaw District Council should look at ways to improve working together for the benefit of the community. Members expressed the view that the role of the existing Parish Council Liaison Group could be reviewed as a way to improve communication with the rural community and it was agreed that a Select Panel could be the most appropriate way to do this. This suggestion was included as a possible topic but it was not included in the Scrutiny Review Work Programme 2012/13 agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 19th June 2012.

However, in January 2012, Bassetlaw District Council's Parish Council Liaison Group had supported a proposal for a joint District Council and Parish Council Working Group to look at future relationships and it was agreed that the evidence collected by this review from the rural areas can contribute to this process.

Parish Councils

The response to the Bassetlaw District Council survey of Parish Councils to date has been limited (refer to Section3) but it did identify some issues in the rural areas. The Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils (NALC) represents 68 Parishes in Bassetlaw and a member of the organisation has offered to work with Parishes to seek their views on pride in

Bassetlaw. There is a desire from the elected Members to continue to improve relationships with the rural communities and the Panel welcome the offer made by NALC to work with Parish Councils to gain more feedback. This information can also feed into the working group looking into future working relationships.

Recommendation:

That this report and the offer of support by the Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils (NALC) to engage with Parish Council's should be referred to Bassetlaw District Council's Parish Council Liaison Group to assist their review of future relationships with rural areas.

Tourism in Bassetlaw

Tourism was the most intensely debated subject across the two days. The witness from Experience Nottinghamshire (EN) which is the Destination Management Organisation for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire provided facts on the visitor economy in the region.

Visitor Economy in Nottinghamshire

- In 2010, 33.4million visitors came to Nottinghamshire - 3.62 million to Bassetlaw
- Currently estimated to be worth £1.38 billion to the local economy - £145 million in Bassetlaw
- Supports 20,550 Full Time Equivalent countywide - 2,231 in Bassetlaw
- In Nottinghamshire 96% are day visitors and only 4% stay overnight – this is the sector to grow.

Experience Nottinghamshire is a private / public partnership and is funded by tourism businesses and Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council. Other district Councils in Nottinghamshire do not provide funding. In the current financial climate of reducing funding there is a need for everyone to work together to increase visitor numbers and improve the local economy. Experience Nottinghamshire has previously worked with the Welbeck Estate and Harley Gallery.

They use a wide range of marketing techniques to promote the area. Bassetlaw District Council is currently working with Experience Nottinghamshire and the Panel wants this relationship to continue to develop.

There was witness evidence from people who were passionate about the need to promote tourism in Bassetlaw and build on the heritage of the district. There was frustration at the perceived lack of action by the Council and the fact that an opportunity was being missed to improve the visitor economy. To quote from one witness “Bassetlaw has a beautiful rope of the finest pearls (collective visitor attractions) which anyone would long to possess but we are offering them up for sale as a mere string of beads and in a plain box”.

The Panel were informed that currently the Council has limited resources to develop tourism. The Economic Development Unit is responsible for delivering tourism but there is no dedicated service, only a part time officer to do the work. The budget of £13,400 has to fund all economic regeneration activities. In spring 2012 the new Bassetlaw Visitor Guide was launched and was praised for its quality. Ten thousand copies are available for distribution to Tourist Information Centres, every library and parish buildings. It is also available on the Bassetlaw website.¹⁰

There was a discussion on what the Council could do to promote tourism and although this review has collected witness evidence on the role of tourism the Panel felt that there was a need for the Council to consider its strategic direction. Bassetlaw District Council has to identify its tourist base and its role in tourism. The Panel heard evidence about the Worksop Priory site which nationally is one of the most important historical sites with the Church, Gatehouse and grounds; Bassetlaw Museum which was highly regarded; National Trust properties such as Clumber Park; Pilgrim Fathers and the Chesterfield Canal. The Panel also heard evidence from the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust of the potential to promote Bassetlaw as an environmental destination through sustainable tourism. Bassetlaw could become a leader in a green rural economy. Currently the Panel heard that there is a lack of infrastructure and supply of quality accommodation to support the overnight stays sector which generates the most economic benefit. It was also stated that we do not promote the accessibility of the area as a destination enough. It is on the East Coast Main Line, located between the A1 and M1 and has two airports in the vicinity. However to promote tourism and exploit the opportunities for income generation we require further investment. It was decided that a short scrutiny process could determine the way forward on tourism for Bassetlaw. This was included as a possible topic but it was not included in the Scrutiny Review Work Programme 2012/13 agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 19th June 2012.

¹⁰ <http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/pdf/Tourism%20Guide2.pdf>

There was a passionate discussion on the promotion of the Pilgrim Fathers in Bassetlaw and the possible missed opportunity of the 400th anniversary in 2020 of landing in America. There was a debate on the claim of Bassetlaw to the Pilgrim Fathers as a brand as most people associate them with Plymouth and there are very few physical sites to see in Bassetlaw except the churches where they preached. However there are tourist businesses operating in Bassetlaw bringing American tourists to visit Bassetlaw because of the Pilgrim Fathers connection. There are also organisations working independently to promote the Pilgrim Fathers connections and will be opening a visitor centre in Scrooby Church shortly. Also the BBC has filmed a historical programme in Scrooby about the Pilgrim Fathers. The Panel was given Gainsborough as an example of what could be achieved in a short time with a regeneration package of Gainsborough Old Hall and town centre improvements. There also appears to be a lack of awareness by local people in Bassetlaw about their heritage.

Several years ago Tourism was represented in Bassetlaw District Council's Cabinet as a Portfolio Holder. The Panel agreed that it was important to have a Portfolio Holder for Tourism to provide a strategic approach. Currently tourism is the responsibility of the Community Prosperity Portfolio Holder. The new Corporate Plan 2012-2015 has identified working with local partners to promote Bassetlaw as a tourist attraction in Ambition One – the Economic Regeneration of our District. The Panel proposed that a recommendation should be to re-instate the Portfolio Holder for Tourism to strengthen the profile of tourism in Bassetlaw. Constitutionally Portfolio Holders are determined by the Leader and following discussions it was decided to make the recommendation to raise the priority of tourism with the existing Community Prosperity Portfolio Holder. This should increase the profile of tourism and raise awareness of its economic potential to the district.

The Panel were aware of the Nottinghamshire County Council Scrutiny Review of Tourism and the Economy (refer to Section 3.3) and are interested to learn the recommendations for encouraging tourism in North Nottinghamshire.

The Panel concluded that there was much to be proud of in the heritage of Bassetlaw and the Council needed to be more responsive to the opportunities that are available to encourage tourism. This is especially important with the limited financial resources available to Bassetlaw District Council

It should be noted that following the end of the review it was confirmed that there are a number of new initiatives which Bassetlaw will be working on. Heritage tourism will have a six month promotional campaign next year, through Experience Nottinghamshire Visit England Notts Heritage Tourism Group and based around famous people from Nottinghamshire such as Shelley, Pilgrim Fathers and Robin Hood. Bassetlaw District Council is taking the lead on the Group.

Recommendation:

That the profile of tourism in Bassetlaw should be given a higher priority by the Portfolio Holder for Community Prosperity.

Economic Activity

There was a discussion about the importance of business to the local community and building a sense of pride in the area. A community needs a thriving economy and vibrant town centres. Access to employment and education to gain skills for life all contribute to a positive attitude.

Town Centres

This is again where the Worksop/ Retford divide is mentioned. Retford is a rural market town and Worksop is an industrial town. The evidence is that the two town centres of Worksop and Retford are “holding their own” even in these difficult financial times. Empty shops give an impression that an area is not cared for and is run down which reduces the pride that people feel in an area. Vacant shops are increasing in Worksop, although here they are in lower numbers. In Retford we compare well to other similar centres. There was a discussion on the options available to deal with this problem such as contacting the landlord (but many are not based locally); alternative short term lets for the property so that they are not empty and Bassetlaw District Council have an officer/member Working Group to reduce the number of derelict and empty buildings. There was also a discussion on the level of business rent and rates. The witness evidence showed that we need to work at improving the image of all the town centres. There were comments on the quality of the retail offer in both towns but the demographics do not support large chain store retailers. It is acknowledged that the perception of Worksop in particular needs to be improved and recent projects including Worksop Waterside Gateway, Worksop Creative Village (both ERDF funded), the move of the Worksop Market to Bridge Street and the Old Market Square in Worksop with its flagship cinema are improving the image.

The Panel considered undertaking a survey of retailers in the four towns on pride in Bassetlaw. The Panel decided to defer this at the present time but it is something that the Town Centre Managers should consider for the future. Retford does have its own Business Forum which is positive and encourages people to shop in Retford. The Retford Forum has recently submitted an application for Portas Funding to improve and revive the high street in Retford but was not successful in the first round and will resubmit the bid for the next round. The businesses have drive and enthusiasm to improve the town

centre. The Retford Business Forum is also looking into innovative ways to encourage people to shop in Retford. The Panel concluded that the Retford business community is using its own initiative and making a positive contribution to pride in Retford.

Worksop does not have a business forum which can be used to positive effect for the town to access funding for improvement schemes and business support. The Panel discussed the possible benefits for Worksop and it was agreed that the Panel would recommend that Economic Development work with businesses to establish a Worksop Business Forum. It was noted that there has to be an interest on the part of the Worksop businesses to be involved or the scheme could fail.

The new Corporate Plan 2012-15 has a priority to promote the Market Towns and attract new businesses and increase footfall. It is hoped that this recommendation will support this Ambition.

Recommendation:

That Bassetlaw District Council works with businesses in Worksop to set up a Worksop Business Forum.

Business

The Corporate Plan 2012-2015 Ambition One refers to the economic regeneration of the district and the importance of Bassetlaw's economy to support enterprise, business and jobs.

There are positives as Bassetlaw has the best start up rate for new businesses apart from Nottingham in Nottinghamshire and the new Enterprise Centre in Retford is progressing well. A business community self-help group of 38 members in Bassetlaw to provide business advice and support has replaced Business Link. The Invest in Bassetlaw project referred to previously will also raise Bassetlaw's profile with the business world which will help to Increase the amount of visitors to the District benefiting tourism and retail businesses directly and indirectly. There are positive aspects to Worksop as its workforce has a good reputation and is home to world leading larger businesses such as Pandrol and Oxo. The Council needs to encourage business to locate in Bassetlaw as there is a lack of full time work and a high proportion of youth and long term unemployment. Broadband provision in rural areas has been identified as a barrier to development and Select Panel 3 which is currently completing its review on rural business will be making recommendations to address this issue.

It appeared from the evidence that the Council could be more flexible, innovative and pro-active in the way that we work with the business community. The local business community needs to respond quickly to situations and cut through red tape and we need to ensure that we work together on issues that are important to encourage new businesses to come to Bassetlaw and to support existing ones. There should be a Marketing Plan for the District as a whole. This information is noted and has to be seen in the context of the available resources to support businesses.

The level of support that the Council provides to business organisations such as North Notts Business Connections, Retford Business Forum, RetfordB4B, and Worksop Business Club which provide networking opportunities and promotional events for Bassetlaw business was raised. The attendance of officers and elected Members at events and meetings is valued as it shows visible support for the business community and sends out a positive message.

Organisations such as the Retford Business Forum and North Notts Business Connections operate an e-mail alert system about future events. Officers and Members can sign up to the alerts and attend the talks and meetings that are relevant to the economy of the District. These are opportunities for the Council to support and understand the local business community. It is also an opportunity for the Council to communicate its policies on business and enterprise to the business community.

The Panel believed that it was important to maintain contact with the wider business community and suggested that there should be an agreement on representation by officers and elected members at meetings and events. As there was a need to raise awareness amongst elected members of wider business activities the Panel wanted a reporting mechanism to Cabinet put in place.

In conclusion the Panel identified that the Council needs to look at ways to be more responsive, co-ordinated and send out the positive messages to the business community with more active involvement by officers and members – building on the good work that has already taken place. This will assist the delivery of the Council's ambitions on Economic Regeneration.

Recommendation:

That Economic Development Unit work with business organisations in Bassetlaw to establish a protocol for Bassetlaw District Council member and officer representation at events and meetings and a quarterly report to Cabinet on progress.

A Quality Environment

Environment

The good quality of the environment in Retford and the rural areas was stated by many witnesses as important to a sense of pride. However, there is room for improvement in the old industrial areas in Harworth and Worksop. The District has 20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and is an important area for wildlife, especially for its ancient woodlands rivers and woodland. The need to improve the quality of the environment was also an issue identified in the survey evidence in Section 3.3.

Groups such as the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust are working to create a natural landscape that maintains the quality of life in Bassetlaw. The Wildlife Trust currently manages 14 nature reserves in Bassetlaw. The Idle Valley Nature Rural Learning Centre works with partners to improve the understanding of the natural environment in the District. The Wildlife Trust also works with the Bassetlaw Local Strategic Partnership and other partnerships to obtain resources for projects as the natural environment has a role in promoting economic development. They advise on land management, work for positive planning for the environment and to support the natural environment. The Bassetlaw's planning process is important to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Bassetlaw District Council's Conservation service received praise from a wide range of witnesses representing business, and Parish Councils for the way that they work with the local community to raise awareness of the historic or architectural buildings and sites in the area. The service is recognised as best practice for the way that it carries out appraisals. The Council has recently designated new Conservation Areas in Carlton, Worksop, Retford and Tuxford. The service is currently working with Parish Councils in four villages to evaluate the need for an Appraisal.

Parks and open spaces allow local communities to engage with their environment and are important to health and wellbeing. There are examples of good quality parks in Bassetlaw such as King's Park in Retford which has a Green Flag Award which is a national standard. Redeveloping Langold Country Park is a priority of the Council in its new Corporate Plan (Ambition Three) and RCAN has supported the work with the local community.

Anti-social behaviour was raised as an issue in the survey of residents and the current year figures show that this is reducing in the District. This is supported at a local level with Neighbourhood Policing.

During the review suggestions were made about improvements that could be made to the public space to promote pride in the built and natural environment as follows:

- Around the Worksop Town Hall
- Retford Road gateway
- Sponsored flowerbeds
- Annual award schemes for shop fronts
- Investigate sources of funding to improve shop fronts
- Signage at points of entry such as the railway stations
- Community Murals on buildings
- Grants/ equipment loan to local community groups to clean signage
- Small things like bulb planting; painting; fencing to involve a community
- Clear litter on the roadside verges of the A1 highway
- Introduce an Adopt a Street / Highway Scheme which encourages people to litter pick in their own area
- Clear derelict colliery sites
- Establish Heritage trails, and walking/cycle routes connecting sites of interest
- Introduce a Bassetlaw Plaque Scheme

The Role of Civic Society

The Panel heard evidence from the Retford Civic Society on the work that it has done to improve and maintain the town's built environment. The Society and its volunteers have contributed to making Retford an attractive place to visit and live which enhances the reputation of the area. Civic Societies can access a wide range of funding which is not available to local authorities. Retford Civic Society has received hundreds of thousands of pounds and often working in partnership has delivered heritage, conservation, restoration and community projects such as the Heritage Trail. The Society also works with other voluntary groups and organisations to keep Retford clean and tidy which contributes to a feeling of pride in the community. It also organises events such as Heritage Day which connects local people to the town. The ethos is working in partnership to move forward.

Worksop Civic Society was only established in March 2012 and has not had the benefit of the same level of investment in the town's history and heritage. The Retford Civic Society helped in the setting up of the Worksop Civic Society which is an example of local communities working together. The Panel welcomes this positive move by local people to improve the

environment in Worksop and pride in the town. It is hoped that the Priory will be developed and it will link in to the other positive developments in Worksop such as the cinema, the Canch and relocating the market.

The Bassetlaw Corporate Plan 2012-2015 has identified enhancing links with the civic societies as a priority in Ambition Three: Involving Communities and Locality Working. The Panel agreed that Bassetlaw District Council should continue to support the Retford Civic Society and establish a protocol to work with the new Worksop Society to deliver a good quality environment in the towns and an increase in pride.

The Civic Society has an annual celebration Civic Day when communities across the country say "we care about where we live". It is proposed that Bassetlaw could use this National Civic Day as a focal point to celebrate community pride in the district.

Recommendation:

Bassetlaw District Council will continue to work in partnership with the Retford and Worksop Civic Societies to recognise national Civic Society Events such as the annual Civic Day to help improve community pride in the towns.

Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector and Volunteers

The witnesses representing the voluntary and community sector including Bassetlaw CVS, the faith community and street pastors gave a more sobering insight into the meaning of pride in the District. There are social issues in Bassetlaw that affect the local community. Bassetlaw does not present a unified image as certain areas have pockets of deprivation with low income and the effects of poverty. In areas of social disadvantage where people do not feel that they have choices they can see the place where they live as the problem. There is a need to build capacity in some communities from a low level. There is a more positive feeling in Retford, the rural areas and in more affluent areas where there is more of a sense of community. People can organise themselves to make things happen and improve the area where they live. The evidence suggested that to generate pride and a feeling of well being people need to be encouraged to do things for themselves and have a stake in society.

The Panel considered that the role of the voluntary and community sector was vital to generate a feeling of pride and wellbeing and to encourage people to participate and do things for themselves. Bassetlaw District Council financially supports a range of voluntary and community groups across the District and does set targets for volunteering in its Service Level Agreements with them. There are constraints on finance but Bassetlaw District Council could provide officer time. The Members were informed that often all that is needed is a small amount of money to seed new groups. The Panel understood that even in a time of budget reductions it was important to retain some funding to assist groups in deprived areas. However, at a national level, the area is not receiving enough Big Lottery Funding compared to other areas as people living in Bassetlaw do not apply in sufficient numbers. The Big Lottery Fund asks BCVS to run campaigns to encourage local community groups to apply for funding and BCVS helps groups to complete the applications but often people do not persevere if the application is turned down. The Panel were concerned as the Big Lottery Funding would provide useful financial support to local groups.

The Members made reference to the Poverty Issues Select Panel in 2011 which had provided evidence on the impact of deprivation in Bassetlaw. The Council is working with partners to produce an Anti - Poverty Strategy to address such issues as financial inclusion and fuel poverty. There is also a need to raise skill levels and aspiration levels across the District including in the more deprived areas and North Notts College aims to bring education to "hard to reach" pupils.

The Panel agreed that it is important to celebrate the success in Bassetlaw as to increase pride we need to change the way that the community perceives itself to raise their aspirations. Bassetlaw Games is a positive example of large numbers of highly motivated people in Bassetlaw who want to make a difference to their own life and their community. It has involved 46 clubs and organisation and 13,000 school children have taken part to increase sport participation. There are variations in participation rates across the District. Communities in the north and west of the district such as Harworth, Carlton and Langold are in the bottom 10% for participation. The Panel were reminded that the people of Bassetlaw are its greatest asset. We need to build on the existing network of volunteers and for the future fill the gaps in volunteering in the areas where it is low.

The Panel heard evidence from the groups who are working with and caring for local communities to give people a sense of self worth and respect which is needed to connect to the community. The faith community works with other groups in Bassetlaw to provide support to improve the quality of life. There are positive projects in the District such as the intergenerational scheme to promote a greater understanding and breaking down fear and misconception between older and younger people. The Panel also heard evidence about the new communities living in Bassetlaw and the need to raise awareness of the different communities. The Polish community is settled in Worksop and there are Turkish and Kurdish

communities in Retford. The Bassetlaw Local Strategic Partnership is helping to address the need to reduce any tensions between communities.

The Panel were informed that the Council should listen to our communities more and develop a better understanding which should improve pride in the district. People should be involved in the decisions so that they do not feel that they are being made on their behalf. Deprived areas are grant dependant and as funding is reduced it is more difficult to work. It was commented that the Council should speed up its response to change and recognise its limits. The key to pride is not promotion alone but timely decisions with the community. The Bassetlaw Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Forum was established in October 2011 aims to provide an opportunity for the VCS in Bassetlaw to work together collectively on activities such as engagement and consultation, services provided across the District and the impact of those under threat and identify best practice. It also provides a forum for the public sector partners and the VCS to meet and increase understanding.

Supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum is identified as a priority in the Corporate Plan 2012-2015 in Ambition 3: Involved Communities and Locality Working. The Panel recognises that this could help to address the issues raised by witnesses and improve the sense of pride in the area.

Recommendation:

Bassetlaw District Council will continue to work with the new Voluntary and Community Sector Forum to support the local involvement in communities to develop a sense of pride in the area where they live.

5. Conclusion

The Panel concluded that it is vital that we understand how we are perceived so that we can counter negative perceptions about the District. Pride is not about facts and figures but it is a positive emotion. We need to work together to encourage a 'can do' and optimistic culture to improve the district. The Panel was impressed by the commitment, energy and passion of our communities and other partner agencies and the honesty of their contributions to improve all aspects of the quality of life in Bassetlaw. The Panel considered a large amount of evidence which was personal to the individuals and based on their perceptions but key messages emerged. The evidence has significantly improved our understanding of Pride in Bassetlaw and also supports the delivery of several priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 2012-2015. The evidence has indicated that often it is not the availability of finance that is a problem but about making changes to the way that we work. It is important as in the current economic and financial the Council has limited finance and officer resources.

As the evidence was qualitative it is difficult to analyse but the Panel recognised the following as important to community pride

- Geography – locating the district
- Communication – timely and co-ordinated
- Leadership – the need for visible leaders raising the profile of the district and responsive to the needs of the community
- Rural Areas – work together for the benefit of all the District
- Tourism – Bassetlaw has much to offer as a tourist destination but there is a need for strategic direction
- Economic Activity – a vibrant economy, attractive town centres and business activity will help increase pride
- Environment- a good quality environment that should be maintained and improved
- Communities – our communities are active but some communities need more support

It is important that we listen to the negative perceptions and comments that have been recorded in this review and hear the message but recognise that there is a balance with the more positive perceptions and comments about the District. The Panel has made practical recommendations which we hope will improve Community Pride in Bassetlaw. We also hope that the Council understand how important this report is to the growth of our district and that serious consideration is needed on moving the ideas set out forward.

6. Appendices

This is available as a separate document in the Members Room, Worksop Town Hall.



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