



# BASSETLAW

## DISTRICT COUNCIL

### NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

2008

## Select Panel 1



# Town Centre Regeneration



Councillor Mrs E. M. Yates  
(Chairman)  
Councillor M. Bennett (Vice  
Chairman)

Final March 2009

Scrutiny is an independent, councillor-led function, working with local people to improve services



## **Introduction**

"The first meeting of this panel took place in July 2008, to conduct a review into the current usage of Worksop and Retford Town Centres and make recommendations to further the regeneration of them. You will see in the following report the extent of the scoping exercise and our recommendations.

We all agreed that in both towns there is a wealth of attractive buildings, Retford is fortunate to have its market place in the heart of the town, whilst Worksop has several features of historic interest. It is hoped that through some of our recommendations, this heritage can be enhanced and promoted for the good of the District and its people.

During the duration of this panel the economic downturn became more apparent, but we feel that we are planning for the future and that any difficulties now would be minimal in the long term.

It became very clear during the review that members feel passionately about their District, as did the witnesses that attended and I would like to thank them, the Policy and Scrutiny Officers and everyone that has been involved with the process."

Councillor Mrs E.M.Yates  
Chairman of Select Panel 1

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## 1. Recommendations

<p><b>1. <u>Retail Opportunities in the Town Centres</u></b></p> <p>Director of Community Service to prepare a six monthly report to Cabinet to monitor progress against '10 Steps to Encourage Strong Retail' to promote retail opportunities in the town centres.</p>
<p><b>2. <u>Market Places</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i A quarterly report to Cabinet to monitor progress on Retford and Worksop Markets</li><li>ii The Council should continue with the existing policies for Retford Market and monitor revenue targets.</li><li>iii A key focus should be to support Worksop Market. This will include measures such as the introduction of barrowmongers on Bridge Street as well as bringing forward proposals to strengthen and develop the retail offer and build fabric of this part of Worksop.</li></ul>
<p><b>3. <u>Bassetlaw Arts Festival</u></b></p> <p>The panel wants the festival to continue and develop. It recommends that the arts festival be established as an annual event with appropriate funding available to maximise the number of town centre venues involved.</p>
<p><b>4. <u>Street Entertainment</u></b></p> <p>Panel recommends the development of a programme of street entertainment within the town centre and using public open space locations.</p>
<p><b>5. <u>Section 106 Agreements</u></b></p> <p>Measures to secure the provision of the public realm improvements through the use of Section 106 Agreements on developments within Town Centres should be included within the Local Development Framework. In the meantime officers should seek to use Section 106 Agreements to secure public realm improvements within town centres wherever possible."</p>
<p><b>6. <u>Signage and Access</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i Recommend signage be put in place from the railway stations including the scenic route at Retford and the proposed Canal Corridor in Worksop; signage within the towns to toilets; places of interest and information points such as the birdcages in Worksop.</li></ul>

<p>ii The County Council be asked to bring forward the full pedestrianisation of Bridge Street Worksop at the earliest opportunity.</p>
<p><b>7. <u>Bus Station, Worksop</u></b></p> <p>The Council should continue to work with the County Council to ensure that a suitable bus station or similar facility serving the centre of Worksop can be provided at the earliest opportunity.</p>
<p><b>8. <u>Proposed Worksop Civic Society</u></b></p> <p>Bassetlaw District Council will facilitate the establishment of a Civic Society or similar for Worksop. It will also provide the £5, 000 surety to the Charity Commission.</p>
<p><b>9. <u>'Corridors and Gateways' into the Town Centres</u></b></p> <p>The Council and its partners should continue to work to improve corridors into the Town Centres.</p>
<p><b>10. <u>Publicity/Marketing Strategy</u></b></p> <p>Work with Public Relations Unit to produce a comprehensive communication strategy including website information on both towns.</p>

**Outside the Scope of the Review**

<p><b><u>Involvement of Young People in the Scrutiny Process</u></b></p> <p>To encourage the Council to use its many channels to have children and young people participate in all Scrutiny Panels.</p>
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## 2. Background

Bassetlaw District Council's Select Panel 1 was tasked to review town centre regeneration by Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of its Annual Programme of Work for 2008/09.

The supporting officer and member statement identified a need for a more up to date approach to promoting the area and developing activity using the public spaces within the Town Centres. The public spaces include the Market Square in Retford which could be used to stage outdoor events such as plays and concerts and more effective use of Worksop Market area and Bridge street in Worksop. Currently the Council has a low level use of arts and culture to support the re-development of the two town centres through the Renaissance work programme. The aim is to look at other approaches to try to increase and maintain footfall. Bassetlaw's Renaissance Framework was reported to Cabinet in June 2008 (see Appendix 3)

It sets out a number of initiatives to improve key elements of our infrastructure.

These initiatives will be part of issues within the Local Development Framework Core Strategy to improve the built environment across the District including

- Chesterfield Canal Corridor
- Market Town Regeneration to strengthen retailing
- Retail Viability Assessment of the main centres to enable the Council to respond to changes in the retail environment
- Programme of Works to upgrade Retford Market Place

It cuts across all of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities of Clean, Green, Safe and Strong, Jobs and Enterprise. The aim is to have a quality development in a quality environment, with high quality jobs.

## 3. Scope of Review

- 3.1 The Panel had a lengthy discussion about the number of towns in Bassetlaw to be included in the review such as Harworth, Tuxford, Retford and Worksop. The Panel decided to concentrate on Worksop and Retford town centres for the review. Reports were submitted to Cabinet in September (see appendix 6) and November 2008 (see appendix 8) with detailed proposals.

### **Regeneration**

Market Towns regeneration is in Bassetlaw District Council's Corporate Plan as a Flagship project (see appendix 4).

Initiatives are being developed

- Bassetlaw Flagship Project - Market Towns Regeneration (Jobs & Enterprise and Safe & Strong Communities) identified six different strands that were approved in 2007

- The main focus of the **Retford Town Centre** regeneration initiative will relate to the redevelopment and refurbishment of the Market Square.

In 2007 the Landscape and Reclamation Team at Nottinghamshire County Council were commissioned to produce a Master Plan and Design Guide for the redevelopment of the Market Square at Retford. The aim is to provide a set of proposals to enhance The Square, the Market Place and the adjoining spaces.

Several key design principles were established through consultation with key stakeholders including local Ward Members and adjacent businesses.

The design should provide for flexibility in the future use of The Square and allow for events and other activities to be accommodated.

A strategic plan for the improvements to the Market Place and The Square has been developed.

Opinions and feedback from local stakeholders and the public were sought from February and March 2009.

It is intended that the final version of the document will be produced by the end of April 2009 and will be reported to Cabinet for approval and adoption.

The Council is keen to make better use of the Market Square which is well positioned as a venue.

The main focus of the **Worksop Town Centre** regeneration initiative will be the upper end of Bridge Street because of the displaced footfall following the opening of the Priory Shopping Centre.

The Worksop Town Centre Regeneration Project will focus on the following areas all of which have been raised as issues either internally or by external groups or individuals, these include:

- Increased usage of the Worksop Market and/or the potential for redevelopment of the site;
- Elimination of the traffic from Bridge Street;
- Environmental Improvements to Bridge Street,
- Increased marketing and promotion of Worksop, and in particular 'Upper Bridge Street' to developers, retailers and entrepreneurs;
- Partnership development with existing retailers and leisure operators located in Upper Bridge Street

Because of the timing of the review the Panel can support the process to make the best use of the available resources. In Worksop there needs to be better use of the Market Place and the top section of Bridge Street to increase footfall which should lead to an increase in trade and economic activity. The Council has been working with Nottinghamshire County Council through its Building Better Communities (BBC) programme to improve the pedestrian link between Bridge Street and the Market Place. It is a conservation area and the Council wants to refurbish using simple materials, tree landscaping and street furniture.

A report was submitted to Cabinet in September 2008 (see appendix 6) with detailed proposals on regeneration initiatives including Chesterfield Canal Corridor Worksop and Bridge Street, Worksop.

The Panel also have to be mindful of the availability of money to spend in the local economy. The Council commissioned a retail capacity study in August 2008 to look at retail floor space, population and demographics to work out who is using the town centres and the potential changes over the next 5-10 years. The plans for the town centres need to take this into account.

There was a discussion about the definition of a town centre and it was established that the Council uses the boundary defined in the old Local Plan but it can be flexible. The new canal side development in Worksop has linkages to the town centre.

There was a discussion about the location of the of the two market squares in Retford and Worksop and the identified need to improve signage from both railway stations to the town centres and to signpost the car parks and shopping centres. The Panel also discussed transport and traffic issues affecting the town centres. Retford now has a new Bus Station and the provision of a new one for Worksop was considered.

The Panel also identified the need to promote the towns. Retford has an existing Civic Society that works to protect and improve the natural and architectural environment of the town. A similar organisation could help to build pride in Worksop.

Fabulous Art in Bassetlaw (FAiB) took place on the weekend of 26th July 2008 with events all over the district - Worksop Town Centre, Retford Town Centre and five rural villages (Misterton, Bothamsall, Beckingham, East Markham and Cuckney). It was organised in partnership with Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire (RCAN) and funded by the SSP Alliance and Bassetlaw District Council. The aim was to bring together a range of arts and entertainment for all ages and encourage people to use the towns and villages. The Panel wanted to look at the effectiveness of this weekend event in encouraging people into the towns and how we could build on this in the future.

The Work Programme submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June, 2008 gave the example of Sheffield City Council and the role of its Ambassadors to promote the use of the city centre. The Panel agreed that to implement an Ambassador type scheme would require significant resources which a district council like Bassetlaw does not have and so this was not included in the scope of the review.

### 3.2 Terms of reference:

Following on from these discussions the Panel agreed the Scope of the Review to be

- i. Worksop Market in particular, and for both Retford and Worksop town centres, look at improvements to signage and increasing footfalls in the market areas.

- ii. What other uses can the Market Squares in Retford and Worksop develop on non market days so that the areas are sustainable?
- iii. Retail opportunities in the town centres.

**4. Method of Review**

**4.1** The following Councillors were appointed to be members of Select Panel 1:

Councillor Mrs. E.M. Yates, Chairman  
 Councillor M. Bennett, Vice-Chairman  
 Councillor V.A. Bowles,  
 Councillor B. Hopkinson  
 Councillor D.R. Pressley,  
 Councillor Mrs. M.W. Quigley,  
 Councillor J. Scott,  
 Councillor R.A. Simpson,  
 Councillor Mrs. V. Wanless,  
 Councillor G.J. Wynne

**4.2** The Panel scheduled meetings with witnesses on the occasions detailed below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
21st July 2008	Scoping Meeting	Russell Slater, Town Centre Manager, BDC
6th August 2008	Worksop Masterplan Update, Performance Indicators, the Retail Capacity Study and 10 Steps to Encouraging Strong Retail.	Russell Slater, Town Centre Manager, BDC
20th August 2008	Markets in Worksop and Retford	David Atkinson, Market Superintendent, BDC Ian Barry, Market Assistant, BDC
1st September 2008	Public Art in Bassetlaw  Bassetlaw Local Development Framework	Adele McCarthy, Strategic Arts Officer, BDC  Richard Schofield, Policy and Implementation Manager BDC Planning Services
17th September 2008	The Role of a Civic Society	Pam Barnsdale, Retford Civic Society and Derek Turner, Chair of Retford Civic

		Society
8th October 2008	Discuss the Way Forward Draft Questions to be sent to Nottinghamshire County Council on signage, street furniture and design in the town centres.	Russell Slater, Town Centre Manager, BDC
22nd October 2008	To decide on the recommendations of the Final Report	Russell Slater, Town Centre Manager, BDC
15th December 2008	To discuss the draft Final Report	David Armiger, Head of Community Prosperity Sarah Pearson, Head of Community Engagement and Performance

4.3 Several of the issues identified by the Panel which affected the town centres regeneration are the responsibility of Nottinghamshire County Council. The Panel sent out a list of questions to Nottinghamshire County Council Highways North as an Officer was unable to attend as a witness. These included:

- The timescale for improving vehicular and pedestrian signage between the train station at Retford and the town centre.
- Are there any proposals to undertake a similar scheme in Worksop and if so when?
- Are there any proposals to undertake any improvements to the pedestrian routes between the train station at Worksop and the town centre?
- What is the turnaround time for repairing the street furniture?
- What progress is being made on the petition that was presented to the County Council's Cabinet in September 2008 requesting a review of the Traffic Regulation Order in Bridge Street.

4.4 The Panel is proposing to assist the establishment of a Civic Society for Worksop and sent out ten letters of enquiry to individuals who may want to be part of the process.

Since the end of the review there have been two positive responses. A further letter has been sent as a follow up to encourage other people to respond.

## 5. **Retail Opportunities in the Town Centres**

### **Evidence for Recommendation**

The 2001 census information provides key data relating to demographics in Bassetlaw. There is a higher percentage of people in low skilled jobs

compared with the national average, which indicates that people have less disposable income to spend, e.g. 14.6 percent of people living in Bassetlaw were in elementary occupations compared with 11.8 percent as the UK average. There was also a higher percentage of people living in Bassetlaw who have no qualifications with 43.2 percent compared to 35.8 percent nationally. The total number of benefit claimants at 15.7 percent was also higher than the national average at 13.9 percent.

The census information does impact on town spending and the type of shops that locate in the town centre. National retailers look at this type of information, but also have access to more up to date data. High-end retailers make informed management decisions and look at this information before investing money.

All town centres are ranked in a league table. Worksop is ranked 232 out of 672 town centres, which is positive. Other local town centres include Retford at 351, Rotherham at 263, Doncaster at 60, Mansfield at 126, Chesterfield at 141 and Newark at 181.

The Town Centre Manager Panel had consulted with local retailers and various problems had been identified:

- Car parking problems for customers and themselves
- Maintenance of the town centre
- Better marketing and promotion of the town centre
- Town Centre crime and anti-social behaviour
- More events and special promotions
- Establish a forum
- Better street cleaning
- Better street furniture.

Some of these issues had been addressed such as a 30-35 percent reduction in shop theft and a detection rate of 70-80 percent which can be attributed to positive policing by the town centre beat manager, CCTV and the effective radiolink scheme which has some 100 members.

The Town Centre Manager had been liaising with the Department for Communities and Local Government about establishing a town centre partnership. The Panel wanted Overview and Scrutiny to note that there was a capacity issue and that the Town Centre Manager was unable to do this with his current level of commitments.

He is also working with town centre retailers to improve the street scene in Worksop as there are beautiful buildings in Bridge Street. The Planning, Policy and Implementation team were in the process of setting up a small grant scheme to make funding available to improve the shop fronts and encourage shoppers.

The Town Centre Manager presented to the Panel a document that outlined '10 Steps to Encouraging Strong Retail' and noted that these were essential to ensure that Worksop and Retford develop as popular destinations. The steps included:

- Flow - shops interspersed with accessibility, e.g. taxi rank, bus station close to retailers
- Mix - making sure there was a good mix of retailers
- Demographics - ensuring shops meet the needs of the population
- Design - variety of designs, e.g. public art work which generates interest to the location
- Public Realm - ensuring the local environment is clean with a high standard of maintenance, e.g. street cleaning, street furniture
- Access - adequate well-maintained car parking and easy access to a bus/train station and other modes of transport, e.g. cycle lanes, pedestrianised areas
- Vitality - key landmarks being maintained, vibrancy within the town centre, e.g. café culture
- Clean and Safe - security with no threatening behaviour or fear of intimidation
- Create Identity - what happens in one town centre should not happen in another. This ensures all shopping areas are unique.

It was agreed that retail opportunities should not be part of the review as work is ongoing as identified in the September 2008 Cabinet Report including a Retail Capacity Study for Worksop and Retford (see appendix 7), improvements to Bridge Street and the County Council is looking at the long term options for improving Worksop bus station. Other regeneration initiatives include the Canal work, and the LDF scheme to look at traffic flow and strengthening the market area.

It was agreed that we needed to identify a clearer way to monitor the progress of the retail initiatives that the Council carries out in its town centres. There needed to be a link to the '10 Steps to Encourage Strong Retail' and a six monthly report to Cabinet to monitor progress.

#### Recommendation

Director of Community Service to prepare a six monthly report to Cabinet to monitor progress against '10 Steps to Encourage Strong Retail' to promote retail opportunities in the town centres.

## 6. **Market Places**

### **Evidence for Recommendation**

In November 2008 a Cabinet report gave details of the Retford Market Square Master Plan and Design Guide which is a cohesive set of proposals for The Square, The Market Place and adjoining spaces. Key design principles were established in consultation with key stakeholders including elected ward members and local businesses. Consultation on the proposals took place in February and March 2009 and a final version of the design will be presented to Cabinet in the next few months. The Council is in the process of applying for funding from the European Regional Development Fund for the implementation of the project.

The Town Centre Manager and market staff have been considering a range of activities to support the markets in the long term. The performance of both Worksop and Retford Market is good compared to other markets in the surrounding area such as Chesterfield, Newark and Gainsborough. The annual income for Retford is stable and Worksop is currently levelling out its performance. The impact of the recession will need to be monitored. The challenge is to increase footfall at both markets and encourage people to use the town centres on market and non-market days.

The service is taking a strategic approach for each year and responds to changing circumstances during the year. This can be seen in the way that the Town Centre Manager has introduced a free car parking initiative in the town centres in response to the late withdrawal of the Christmas Continental Market arrangement. The concession will encourage shoppers to come to both towns. The primary aim is to concentrate on market days and this may encourage re-visits on non-market days.

It is recognised that Worksop and Retford have separate identities as markets and the town centres provide a different range of goods and services. Retford is located in one square - good location in the main flow of pedestrian movement. Worksop is nearer Sheffield and Meadowhall than Retford which offer a wider range of goods. The Town Centre has tried to encourage small independent shops into Worksop. Retford has these due to the local population structure. Several initiatives are being proposed for Retford such as an advertising campaign under the theme of 'Meeting the Nicest People at Retford Market' aimed at promoting the social aspect of outdoor markets. In Worksop an Auction was introduced on Saturday mornings at Worksop Market from 12th July, 2008. It is entertaining and the Council takes 10% of the value of goods sold. This has been possible because of changes to the Local Government Act. It has been a success with individuals coming from outside the local area such as Lincolnshire. The people using the market include antique dealers, car booters and families. It has not particularly raised income but has increased footfall in the area and started to attract new stallholders. There is the possibility of extending the range of goods available for auction to include things such as game due to changes in environmental health legislation. Two key issues have been identified

- Storage - the temporary storage in the old Car Park Office is no longer available and a shipping container is needed for storage.
- To take the Auction to the next level it needs a formal covered area in the market area.

It is a good initiative and the Council needs to consider how to support it in the long term. The Panel recommends supporting the Market Staff at Worksop with long-term development of the Saturday Auction initiative and to make more facilities available for storage.

In addition Shopmobility will be relocating to the Worksop Market area to attract more people (see appendix 5). This scheme will also include new toilet provision. A temporary storage solution noted above could be to refurbish the existing toilets.

The Town Centre Manager is working with local traders on Bridge Street as there are concerns about the level of footfall. The opening of the Priory

Centre has created activity in that area of Worksop town centre. The top of town is historic with beautiful buildings and the Council will be launching a small grants scheme in 2009 to make the shop fronts more attractive. One idea being considered is introducing barrowmongers on Bridge Street to encourage shoppers to walk to the top of the town and the market area. The 'Service Improvement Bid' has been submitted for funding for this project.

The recommendations reflect the fact that although Retford Market is trading well and is a good location for events with easy access it does need to keep progressing and moving forward. Worksop has been identified as needing more support. Bassetlaw is currently in discussion with Nottinghamshire County Council about the options for the area. Once there is a solution the Council can spend on the infrastructure.

Recommendation:

- i A quarterly report to Cabinet to monitor progress on Retford and Worksop Markets
- ii The Council should continue with existing policies for Retford Market and monitor revenue targets
- iii A key focus should be to support Worksop Market. This will include measures such as the introduction of barrowmongers on Bridge Street as well as bringing forward proposals to strengthen and develop the retail offer and built fabric of this end of Worksop.

## 7. **Bassetlaw Arts Festival**

### **Evidence for Recommendation**

The Strategic Arts Officer, gave a brief outline of the work that she has undertaken in her first year in post. She has set up a website - [www.creativebassetlaw.org.uk](http://www.creativebassetlaw.org.uk) - which is a resource for the community to access arts support.

The Strategic Arts Officer developed the Bassetlaw Arts Festival. The first was on 26th July, 2008 to promote public arts in Bassetlaw and to raise awareness. It was targeted at the two town centres of Worksop and Retford and five rural areas including Beckingham, Misterton, Cuckney, East Markham and Welbeck. The Strategic Arts Officer worked with Bassetlaw's Rural Officer to involve Parish Councils in the villages.

The event used local art and local talent and included live music, sculpture and pottery workshops.

There has been positive feedback about the event but it is hoped to improve the publicity in future. The feedback has indicated that people came into the town centres to attend specific events e.g. Jazz. and the attendance at the workshops was higher than expected. It was agreed the Festival should have

a set date in the calendar in the future. The date of the Festival was being reviewed and there was a suggestion to move it forward one week before the summer school holidays start. It is a long-term aim to build on the success of this event and add other community events.

It was agreed that a future event would consider more street events as these create a vibrancy in the town centres. Retford Square could be used for street performers. It was not possible to close Bridge Street, Worksop to traffic which prevented certain types of street performance and therefore the policy on road closures needs to be raised with Nottinghamshire County Council.

The Strategic Arts Officer and Bassetlaw District Council's Public Relations Unit will work to produce a Communication Plan for the event. The Arts Event had a small promotion budget of £5,000 in 2007/08 but there is a budget available 2009/10 for the Festival. Currently the service is also applying for external funding for the project in 2009. It was suggested that the Strategic Arts Officer should develop a theme for the Bassetlaw event. The Panel looked at examples including the lantern parade which works well in Bolsover. This involves local people attending the event making a lantern for an evening parade. Another example is making flags for local buildings as in the Ulverston Flag Festival in the Lake District. Possibilities such as these could be considered for the Bassetlaw Festival which would extend the focus and length of the arts festival. In future the Arts event could be linked to the proposed developments at the Priory in Worksop.

**Recommendation:**

The panel wants the festival to continue and develop. It recommends that the arts festival be established as an annual event with appropriate funding available to maximise the number of town centre venues involved.

**8. Street Entertainment**

**Evidence for Recommendation**

The Bassetlaw Arts Festival demonstrated that street events create a vibrancy in the town centres. They encourage people to visit. The Town Centre Manager is working on a programme for Worksop and Retford to have street entertainment such as juggling, in the weeks before Christmas. Public entertainment encourages trade but it is difficult to demonstrate economic benefit. We want to encourage open air productions and it may be useful to contact groups that have received Lottery funding.

**Recommendation:**

Panel recommends the development of a programme of street entertainment within the town centre and using public open space locations.

## **9. Section 106 Agreements**

### **Evidence for Recommendation**

The Planning Service works with the Town Centre Manager on economic development. Public Art has not been considered by the authority in detail to date but there is a link to tourism. The role of Planning Services is to provide a policy framework. Clear policies will be developed through the Local Development Framework.

The Panel looked at the definition and role of public art which improves the environment through the arts. It contributes to regeneration by encouraging people to use an area and benefit the community. To have a Public Arts Strategy a Council needs to have supporting policies in place. The Panel looked at the example of Bolsover District Council which does have a strategy in place and has developed the use of funding from Section 106 Agreements to be used for public art such as sculpture or community art. Currently Bassetlaw District Council does not have a policy or strategy in place and would need to attract money to fund public art.

A report was submitted to Cabinet November 2008 (see appendix 8) on the Council's approach to development schemes in the retail centres of Worksop and Retford. Consideration should be given to the use of Section 106 agreements to provide improvements to the public realm, including public art and improvements to CCTV.

#### Recommendation:

Measures to secure the provision of the public realm improvements through the use of Section 106 Agreements on developments within Town Centres should be included within the Local Development Framework. In the meantime officers should seek to use Section 106 Agreements to secure public realm improvements within town centres wherever possible."

## **10. Signage and Access**

### **Evidence for Recommendation**

Improved signage for the town centres was part of the remit of the Panel. There was an identified need for improved vehicular and pedestrian signage from both Retford and Worksop train station to the town centre. In addition there needed to be more signs to the car parks, other shops and community facilities such as The Crossing in Worksop. The Panel suggested that we could investigate the possibility of sponsored signs. In the longer term with the new Tesco development there will be a footpaths scheme. Planning Services are also looking at developing a scenic route for Worksop in the long-term linked to the Priory Centre development.

There were concerns about the state of some of the street furniture within Bridge Street and questioned the turnaround time for repairs.

Many if the issues raised are the responsibility of the County Council. As a representative of the County Councils Highways service was unable to attend the meeting it was decided to send questions to the County Council on this subject.

To date a verbal response to the questionnaire has been received as follows:-

- i Q - Improved signage between Retford Train Station and the town centre.

A - Drawings were completed about two years ago and County worked with the Retford Civic Society on the signage. The scheme has not been implemented as Nottinghamshire County Council has changed the design contractor to Scott Wilson. If the scheme is to progress it needs to be put forward for funding allocation from the Local Transport Plan budget.

- ii Signage improvements in Worksop

A - Scott Wilson are looking at design solutions in public areas such as the bus station and train station. No work is planned currently and there is only a limited amount of funding for new schemes. If the scheme is to progress it needs to be put forward for funding allocation from the Local Transport Plan budget.

- iii Q - Poor quality pedestrian routes in Worksop between the train station and the town centre.

A - The County Council makes sure that the footpaths are safe. There are no plans for a scenic route which may involve a footbridge over the Canal. Nottinghamshire County Council would have to look at priorities within the budget. Our current consultant partners are investigating the feasibility of a number of pedestrian /cycle routes around the Worksop Town centre area, including routes from Worksop station. Again any proposals are subject to funding being available from either LTP or Passenger Transport funds (through improvements to the bus station)

- iv Q - Street Furniture in Retford and Worksop. What is the turnaround time for repairs?

A - Items of street furniture that are considered to be in a dangerous state will be removed as soon as possible. Repairs/replacement will depend on the type of street furniture, as "spare parts" are not held in store, although minor repairs can be undertaken at the depot. Replacement requires funding, which has a limited budget. Unfortunately "turn around time" cannot be specific.

- v Q - Civil Parking Enforcement

A - Highways will investigate the progress on the Traffic Regulation Order petition. There are approximately 1,500 special access permits that meet the criteria in Bassetlaw. This issue requires change to the Traffic Regulation Order for Worksop Town Centre (Bridge Street in particular) which will be complex. Recent concerns about the obstruction of loading; parking by the "disabled"; vehicle damage to street furniture,

and pedestrian safety will be reviewed shortly, with the view of proposals being put forward for consultation and financial allocation.

The Town Centre Manager is looking into different options for the traffic systems in Worksop town centre and a petition is being organised by local residents and retailers to review the pedestrian order on Bridge Street.

The Panel emphasised the need for further urgent consideration to the full pedestrianisation of Bridge Street in Worksop. The continued use of this road by cars has been identified by a wide range of groups as being a major problem for the Town Centre. The Panel wished to see a firm commitment to a full pedestrianisation scheme, with suitable provision for the needs of severely disabled drivers, being made by the County Council as soon as possible.

**Recommendation**

- i Recommend signage be put in place from the railway stations including the scenic route at Retford and proposed Canal Corridor in Worksop, signage within the towns to toilets; places of interest and information points such as the birdcages in Worksop
- ii The County Council be asked to bring forward the full pedestrianisation of Bridge Street Worksop at the earliest opportunity.

**11. Bus Station, Worksop**

Members discussed the possibility of a new bus station for Worksop and its location. Retford had a new bus station in 2007. Currently the bus operator Stagecoach, and Nottinghamshire County Council are carrying out a survey asking residents about what bus service provision they want. There was a discussion about how this could be achieved as the bus operator owns the land for the bus station.

It was agreed that the review should recommend a new bus station for Worksop.

**Recommendation:**

The Council should continue to work the County Council to ensure that a suitable bus station or similar facility serving the centre of Worksop can be provided at the earliest opportunity.

**12. Proposed Worksop Civic Society**

**Evidence for Recommendation**

Pam Barnsdale and Derek Turner explained how the Retford Civic Society was set up and its role. The group is a non-political, conservation and amenity group and is a registered charity. It aims to

- protect the architectural and natural environment of Retford and
- improve Retford's public amenities for present and future generations,
- offer its members a social programme of events.

The Society works well with the District and County Councils in general and other groups in the town. It has over 100 members but this does change over time and it also has a range of ages.

The Society can access funding as it has charitable status - approximately £100,000 in partnership in the last four years. It has accessed Heritage Lottery, Building Better Communities, Alliance SSP, Veolia and WREN funding.

Its achievements include helping to make Retford a more attractive place with schemes such as Retford in Bloom, refurbishment of the Sebastopol cannon; Community Schemes including clearing litter and graffiti; establishing with others, the annual Charter Day celebration in Retford and developing the Retford Heritage Trail Guide. The Society also aims to increase business for local businesses in the Retford area by bringing people and revenue to the town. They have found that building on success leads to improved pride in the area.

The representatives explained how to start a group. The Retford Society was started by holding a public meeting asking people to attend if they were interested in setting up a civic society. It is useful to start with a social event and charge membership just to cover costs. There needs to be a social element to encourage people to become and also remain a member. The Society organises visits to local attractions. It is useful to have a mix of members - professional, retired, working, children and young people as members will not become involved in every activity. They will join a project that reflects their interests. Most importantly the people who set this up and the members need enthusiasm.

The main expense is £5,000 to register as a charity. This is needed as a surety to the Charity Commission. Retford is a member of EMACS (East Midlands Association of Civic Societies) which has 15 member towns who exchange information. The umbrella organisation is the Civic Trust and Retford Civic Society is a member of the Trust. Information on Civic Societies is available on the Civic Trust website - [www.civictrust.org.uk](http://www.civictrust.org.uk). The Trust have the expertise to call on for town centre regeneration projects and other support.

### The Way Forward

The proposed Civic Society has to be non-political but Bassetlaw District Council could support the initial setting up process by advertising in Bassetlaw News and using the Council website. Bassetlaw District Council could also provide the £5,000 surety for the Charity Commission to register the Society as a charity. The Public Relations Unit can produce a communications plan and liaise with the local media on positive coverage of the proposed Society. The Council could also set up and advertise a public meeting for people interested in setting up a society, but could not be involved directly in the process.

The Panel suggested the people who could be initially approached and a letter sent by the Chairman of the Council to see whether they are interested in setting up and developing a Civic Society for Worksop. If there is sufficient interest, a meeting would be set up in a local venue. Councillors Mrs E. Yates (Chairman of Select Panel 1, D. Hare (Chairman of the Council), V. Wanless and Pam Barnsdale (Retford Civic Society) will attend. At this meeting information would be provided on the roles and responsibilities of a Civic Society and to see whether those interested would be happy to pursue the initiative. If successful, a public meeting would be organised at a venue that would encourage a wide range of the members of the local community to attend. The Town Centre Manager would also attend. BCVS and Bassetlaw District Council would also advertise the public meeting.

This approach has been confirmed by the Councils Solicitor as the Panel has asked people about their interest in developing a civic society in Worksop before Cabinet had approved this recommendation. However, the Panel Members were also aware that they did not want to make this recommendation to Cabinet if there was not sufficient support from members of the local community. To date there have been 5 positive responses to the request.

Recommendation:

Bassetlaw District Council will facilitate the establishment of a Civic Society or similar for Worksop.

It will also provide the £5,000 surety to the Charity Commission

### **13. 'Corridors and Gateways' into the Town Centres**

#### **Evidence for Recommendation**

The Planning Service provides the policy framework for economic regeneration in Bassetlaw including the Local Development Framework (LDF), which is replacing the Local Plan, conservation, trees and environmental planning. Conservation areas do have a role to play in town centre regeneration and maintaining the attractive gateways into the towns. New conservation areas have been declared at London Road in Retford and Gateford, Worksop. The Council continues to review its conservation areas. The draft Open Spaces Study was completed in December 2008. The recommendations of this study will help Bassetlaw District Council to develop new policies and inform future management strategies about open spaces and green areas in Bassetlaw as part of the LDF evidence base.

The Chesterfield Canal regeneration scheme is a long term project to link the area to the South Yorkshire Canal and the national network. It will regenerate the whole length of the Canal and is an example of good partnership working on one of the main routes into Bassetlaw.

The ongoing Enforcement Select Panel has also looked at the need to have an attractive approach to the town centres to encourage people to visit. The Panel discussed the routes into Worksop and Retford and how the Panel,

local Councillors and the local community should work together to maintain and improve the quality of the approach routes for example the Retford Road access to Worksop.

Recommendation:

The Council and its partners should continue to work to improve corridors into the Town Centres

#### **14. Publicity/Marketing Strategy**

##### **Evidence for Recommendation**

Often the local media coverage on Worksop town centre is negative and the Panel looked at examples about Worksop Market and the town centre. The negative image could impact on potential visitors, businesses and investors to Worksop. The Panel is concerned at the effect on town centre regeneration.

The Retford Civic Society has produced the Retford Heritage Trail. Bassetlaw Council have applied for Nottinghamshire County Council Building Better Communities funding for a leaflet about Worksop to launch in Spring 2009 and for Interpretation Panels on Worksop Priory and Castle Hill.

The PR Unit of Bassetlaw District Council will develop a Communication Plan to provide information on current regeneration projects in the town centres to inform residents about the future plans. The November edition of Bassetlaw News has included an article on our markets.

Recommendation:

Work with Public Relations Unit to produce a comprehensive communication strategy including website information on both towns.

#### **15. Outside the Scope of the Review**

##### **Involvement of Young People in Scrutiny**

##### **Evidence for Recommendation**

The Beacon Scheme was set up to recognise examples of best practice in service delivery in local government. Norfolk County Council's Youth Service and South Norfolk Council received a joint award for engaging with young people, particularly in the democratic process. Norfolk's Active Citizenship team has developed the Hear by Right standards for the active involvement of young people across Norfolk. Arising from the Beacon Council Scheme, the Department for Communities and Local Government has established the Peer Support Fund. The purpose of this is to provide funding to Beacon Councils to disseminate best practice and offer support to other local authorities.

Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk District Council both worked with Bassetlaw as part of our involvement in IDeA's Rural Excellence Scheme and as a result Norfolk County Council approached Bassetlaw to become involved in the Beacon Support Scheme. In April 2008 (see appendix 2) Cabinet approved the scheme with 20 days of mentoring support to the Council and its partners. The work is looking at youth engagement (as outlined in Cabinet report September 2007- (see appendix 1) with a focus on the links with Scrutiny.

Members were given training on 14<sup>th</sup> October as part of the programme. The aim was to provide an overview of engagement techniques and practical tips for involving young people in the democratic process. The Chairman had attended the training and she raised the issue of involving of Young People in the general scrutiny process and not just on issues affecting Young People. There was a discussion about the ways that Young People could be involved in the process.

The Bassetlaw Youth Assembly (BYA) have been part of the scrutiny process on issues directly affecting Young People but they set their own work programme and we can only request their input. The BYA received the report of the Services to Young People review and a survey as part of the Alcohol Related Anti- Social Behaviour review. The Council was involved in a programme run by Warwick University Research Consortium on Active Citizenship in 2006-07 to involve Young People in the democratic process. There are examples of Councils who operate Young People's Cabinet; allow young people to ask questions at Cabinet and where members go into schools and colleges to talk about what they do.

The Council is working with Bassetlaw Local Strategic Partnership on an information event called 'Plugged' in March 2009 which will involve young people aged 13-14 from all Bassetlaw Schools. Bassetlaw is also working with partners to recruit Young Advisors who will be part of the consultation process and they could in the longer term become involved in the scrutiny process.

The Review of Play Provision involved a wider cross section of children across the district. Members went into local schools and asked children about their existing local play facilities and asked their views on what should be available. This informed the recommendations of the Panel.

The panel agreed that one of recommendations of the review would be to encourage the Council to use its many channels to have children and young people participate in all Scrutiny Panels. This is not specific to the Town Centres Regeneration review as Overview and Scrutiny Committee is being asked to consider the principle of Young People's involvement. The approach will need to be thought out and we will need to make young people aware of what scrutiny is and their role in the process. This could be done through the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People.

**Recommendation**

To encourage the Council to use its many channels to have children and young people participate in all Scrutiny Panels

## **16. Conclusion:**

The Panel recognised the importance of the town centres in Retford and Worksop to their local communities and the local economy. The recommendations of the review will support initiatives for their continued economic regeneration.

The review also considered the role of the local markets in attracting people to the towns and the part that they played in the economy centres. The Panel is keen to support the continued use and development of both markets.

The Panel looked at innovative ways to attract people to use their local town centres which in turn will promote economic activity. This included the continued support of the Bassetlaw Arts Festival and looked at the longer term possibilities for the event.

Access to the town centres was seen as important and the appearance and attractiveness of the 'corridors' would encourage visitors. There was also support in the long term for the provision of a new bus station in Worksop.

A positive image of the town centres both to the residents of Bassetlaw and potential visitors is needed to help maintain growth and development. The Panel wants a Communication Plan to give information on the new developments in Bassetlaw that will support economic regeneration.

The Panel has taken a long term view and the aim is to have sustainable local economies that will be robust and support the markets and town centres.

In addition at the conclusion of the review the Panel decided to include a general recommendation for all future Scrutiny Panels to consider the participation of young people in the process. Members believe that the input of young people into the scrutiny process is significant corporately. The views of young people need to be considered in service provision and we want to encourage them to be part of our local democracy.





INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Bassetlaw-Serving North Nottinghamshire

