

LOCAL ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE



Linking the regeneration of Basing View, a town centre business park, with local current and future skills needs

Local challenges and priorities

The borough of Basingstoke and Deane has a population of just over 165,000 people and is located in the affluent economic hub of the south east of England. The borough's strategic location, close to London and other important economic centres in the region, combined with excellent transport links (road, rail and air), a diverse commercial property offer, and award-winning retail, leisure and cultural facilities have meant the town has attracted major employers.

The borough has a diverse business base and is home to many corporate headquarters. It is not dependent on any given sector and, overall, it has remained fairly economically sustainable during the recession.



The borough is home to around 6,000 businesses, of which 90% have less than 10 employees. Key sectors include finance, ICT, engineering, retail, health and distribution. Employment rate stands at 76.8% while unemployment is currently at 5.3% (youth unemployment stands at 4.9%).

Just over 35% of the adult population have a higher education (post 18). The borough provides jobs for 67% of its workforce. 27,000 people commute out of the borough to work while 24,000 people commute into the borough to work.

However, the world-wide recession means the landscape for economic development in the area is changing rapidly. Overall, the borough has remained strong economically but it has not been immune to the impact of the recession. There has been a rise in **unemployment**, including youth unemployment. The recession has also heightened the **mismatch between the skills in the workforce and the jobs available**. Employers report issues when looking to recruit highly **qualified graduates** and people with **entrepreneurial skills**. At the other end of the spectrum, employers also report a lack of basic **employment skills** in adults and young people.

The crisis has also led to a **reduction in public sector funding** whereby public organisations have fewer resources to support the local economy. However, this can also be an opportunity to change the way the local authority and its partners work together reinforcing the need for **closer partnership** working and **closer dialogue** between education and business.

The current key challenge for the borough is to remain economically strong in the current climate and retain and attract new employers to the area. The local authority and its partners need to be pro-active and the following priorities have been identified as part of the council's economic strategy:

- Develop new relationships and strengthen existing relationships with business to create an on-going dialogue
- Facilitate the development of a suitably skilled workforce to meet business demand
- Support new and small businesses to develop and grow
- Work with partners to improve infrastructure where businesses are adversely affected
- Enable a good supply of high quality, well priced commercial property
- Promote the borough as a location for business through a joined up marketing strategy supported by the council and partners
- Ensure that council procedures and strategies support business needs where possible

Focus of the Basingstoke Local Action Plan

The ESIMeC Local Action Plan for Basingstoke and Deane will play an important role in supporting Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and its local partners in achieving these priorities and contributing to the area remaining economically dynamic and attractive.

Focus of the Local Action Plan

To develop this Local Action Plan, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council worked with a Local Support Group of stakeholders, including representatives from the education sector, business intermediaries, public sector representatives and businesses. The role of this group was to identify the key issues surrounding economic and workforce development in the borough, to assess how the ESIMeC experience could be most beneficial at local level and to determine the focus of the Local Action Plan.

The group decided to **focus the Local Action Plan on the regeneration of Basing View**, a town centre based business park. The group felt Basing View was the one flagship project with the potential to bring **economic and employment opportunities** to the town both through its physical regeneration and through associated projects. This regeneration project will also deliver the most fundamental commercial regeneration the town has had in the last 20 years. The opportunities to make a difference to the town's economy through this regeneration are multiple and long-term, with the redevelopment expected to take around 15 years.

The key opportunities offered by the redevelopment of Basing View are:

- Improved positioning of the town as a modern and vibrant business centre
- Flexible and diverse accommodation offer for businesses to grow
- Inward investment: new companies choose Basingstoke as their destination
- Job creation: growing and new businesses create quality jobs
- Skills development: better match between supply and demand to ensure the local population is equipped to meet the need of new and growing businesses
- Sustainable development: an energy and resource efficient business area

Links with ESIMeC

The regeneration of Basing View will offer workforce and employment opportunities for local residents both as part of the redevelopment itself and through new companies choosing the park as their location. The town's working population as well as young people currently in the education system must be equipped with the right skills to respond to employer demand. ESIMeC has helped this process through the exchange of experience in terms of good practice in preparing young people for the world of work, how to prepare the workforce for the green economy and jobs, of how to anticipate future skills needs, how to ensure employment and economic development are progressed together and has reinforced the need and value for closer partnership working.

Vision

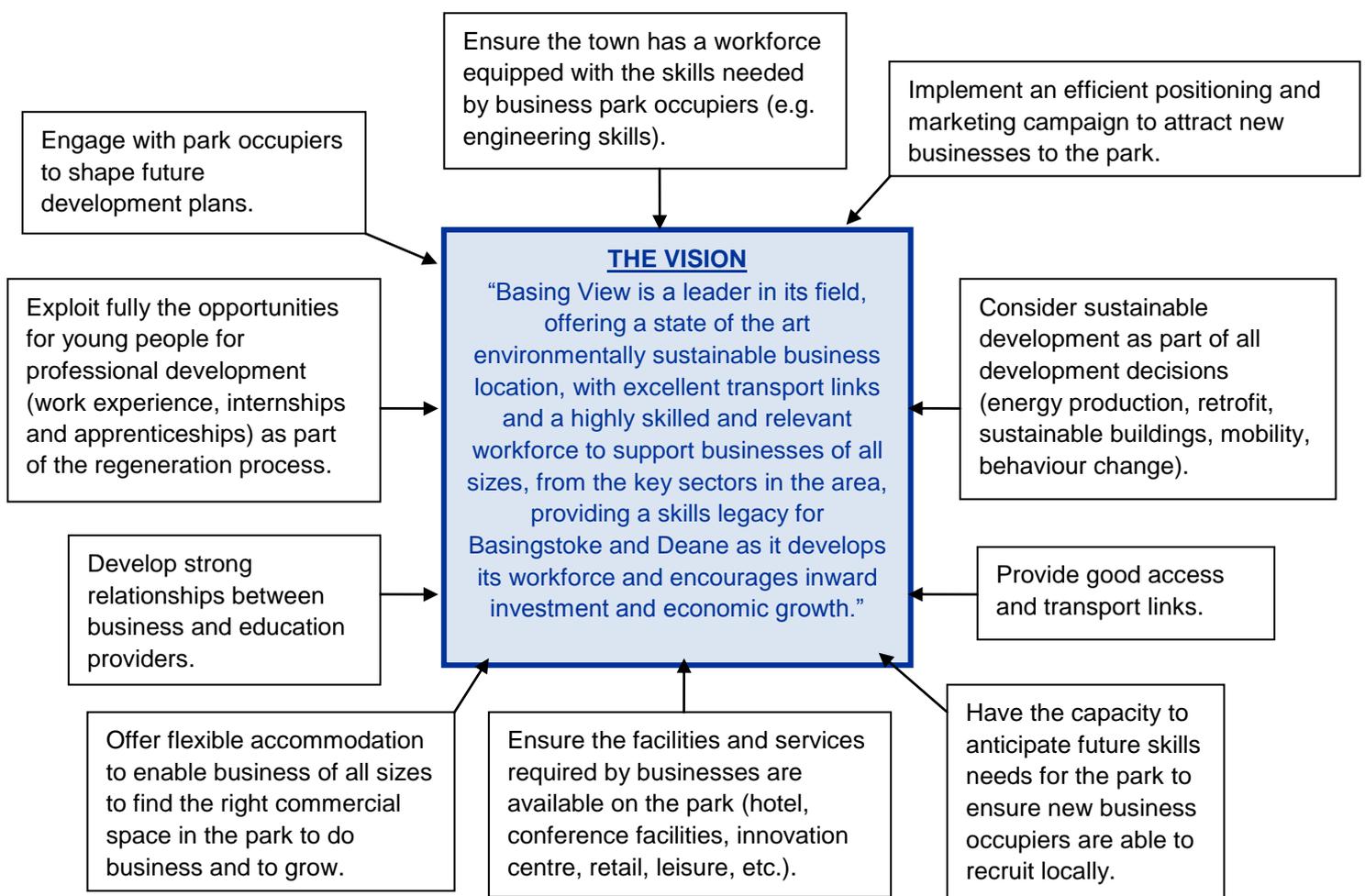
A vision that frames the priority objectives and actions that will be implemented through the delivery of the Basingstoke Local Action Plan was developed by the Local Support Group. The vision sets out the ambitions and aspirations for the redevelopment of Basing View and acts as the ultimate goal of the Local Action Plan and will be used as a benchmark to assess progress.

“Basing View is a leader in its field, offering a state of the art environmentally sustainable business location, with excellent transport links and a highly skilled and relevant workforce to support businesses of all sizes, from the key sectors in the area, providing a skills legacy for Basingstoke and Deane as it develops its workforce and encourages inward investment and economic growth.”

Key steps analysis

To achieve this vision, a series of key steps will need to be completed as the Local Action Plan is delivered. As part of the local action planning process, a short analysis of what those steps are was carried out. The following diagram shows those key steps:

KEY STEPS TO ACHIEVE THE VISION



Priority objectives

The key steps analysis was a useful exercise to carry out as part of the planning process as it enabled the ULSG members to break down the vision into priority objectives that will underpin the key actions to be implemented over the life of the Basing View redevelopment.

The priority objectives are:

1. Develop a clear vision for the occupation of Basing View
2. Creatively market Basing View and Basingstoke as a modern and vibrant business location
3. Understand and anticipate the skill needs of employers and identify and address skills gaps
4. Work with businesses and education providers to improve the level of skills for employment
5. Raise the profile of STEM subjects and promote careers in engineering
6. Raise aspiration and educational attainment of local young people
7. Ensure Basing View offers a relevant and flexible accommodation offer to suit a good mix of businesses of different sizes and sectors
8. Explore the potential of turning Basing View into a sustainable and 'super green' low carbon business area, creating a unique selling point for Basing View

Scope of the Local Action Plan

Although the core focus of the Local Action Plan is the redevelopment of Basing View, some of the actions identified in the planning process are not limited to the geographical area of the park and will form part of wider actions that will need to be implemented at borough level. This is particularly true of the actions linked to skills development and employment.

The development potential of Basing View is long-term and is estimated to be around 15 years. The actions presented in this LAP are initial actions to be implemented to pave the way for a successful redevelopment. This LAP is intended to be a live document. Existing actions will be updated and new actions will be identified as the redevelopment progresses.

Actions

Priority Objective 1: Develop a clear vision for the future occupation of the park

The regeneration of Basing View provides a significant opportunity to attract new businesses to the area as well as offering flexible space for existing businesses to grow. However, it is important to understand the sort of businesses the regenerated facilities could attract. Anticipating future occupation will help develop a targeted marketing campaign as well as planning for the skills the local workforce will need to meet the needs of these new employers.

Actions include:

- Map the current occupation of the park
- Set up a Basing View Occupier's Forum
- Research newly-created businesses in the region and assess sector trends

Priority objective 2: Develop a comprehensive marketing and positioning campaign

The redevelopment of Basing View is a key priority for the development of the area both in terms of the built environment and the economy. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council sees the redevelopment as a unique opportunity to put Basingstoke on the map as a prime location for businesses. It is therefore essential to communicate clearly and efficiently on the positive steps taken as part of the redevelopment to ensure potential investors are aware of the benefits of choosing Basing View as their location. To achieve this, a comprehensive marketing and positioning campaign is required.

Actions include:

- Develop and launch Basing View website
- Work with Destination Basingstoke and Muse Development (appointed developers) to develop a joint marketing strategy/campaign
- Explore the potential to establish a Basing View Ambassadors Scheme

Priority objective 3: Understand and anticipate the skills needs of Basing View and Basingstoke employers and identify gaps

Understanding the skills needs of local employers and having a clear and comprehensive picture of the local skills provision are essential to ensure that gaps in provision are addressed. Collecting evidence both quantitative and qualitative will support the dialogue between education and business and will provide the basis for the development of relevant training at local level. In addition, having the capacity to anticipate future skills needs for the area will ensure young people currently in the education system can make informed choices on their future prospects while ensuring local employers have a workforce pool available with the relevant skills.

Actions include:

- Analyse the findings of the Barriers to Growth business survey to understand obstacle to growth for businesses
- Analyse the results of the Hampshire Skills Survey to understand skills needs and gaps in the area
- Analyse the results of a skills provision mapping study
- Use existing business partnerships to gather intelligence on evolving skills needs and trends to influence skills provision
- Develop a comprehensive approach to skills forecasting

Priority objective 4: Improve levels of employability skills

It is essential to ensure that the working population is appropriately skilled to attract and retain major employers to the town. However, this does not only refer to the need to meet formal and technical requirements. Employability skills are also an important part of up-skilling the workforce.

Employability skills refer to the wider skills needed for employment and include a knowledge of how to behave in an employment environment, interview skills and how to apply for a job. Employers report that many people leaving an education environment do not have these skills making it harder for young people to secure jobs.

The lack of employability skills or skills for employment is regularly reported as a barrier to growth by local employers. Businesses need a workforce that is work ready, adaptable and that is equipped with the basic skills required in a work environment.

Actions include:

- Identify the employability skills required by employers
- Set up the Skills for Employment Action Group
- Develop a package of opportunities for young people to develop their skills for employment
- Foster links between the M3 Job Club and education providers to set up a mentoring scheme
- Explore the potential of setting up a borough-wide scheme to recognise skills for employment of young people
- Work with training providers and development contractors to ensure that the regeneration of Basing View offers an opportunity to develop technical and specialist construction skills.

Priority objective 5: Raise the profile of STEM subjects, jobs and careers

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Basingstoke is home to a significant number of science and engineering businesses. This sector employs around 25% of the workforce in engineering and engineering related businesses. Consultation with businesses from that sector shows that recruitment issues have started to occur. Focusing on one specific sector will also enable the partners to try and test some initiatives which could then be adapted and transferred to other sectors.

Actions include:

- Map existing training and progression routes in engineering
- Organise Teen Tech, a one-day event aiming at promoting careers in science and engineering
- Assess the barriers and obstacles to the take up of STEM subjects and careers in science and engineering
- Work with European partners to identify common issues, good practice and experience through a Leonardo Small Partnerships project
- Explore the potential of developing continuous professional development opportunities for STEM teachers
- Promote diversity of careers in science and engineering

Priority objective 6: Raise aspiration and educational attainment of local young people

Historically, high employment rates in the area have traditionally meant that it is fairly easy for young people to find employment when leaving school and therefore the need to continue into further or higher education. This is reflected in Basingstoke and Deane has had lower than average levels of residents who are qualified to level 4 (degree level). One of the contributing factors considered is the lack of a university in the town, meaning that people leave the borough to study, many not returning once they have completed their qualifications.

However, the recession has led to a decrease in manufacturing and retail activity and an ever more competitive labour market where employers seek a workforce with higher qualifications. Local employers report difficulties to recruit highly qualified graduates and often have to attract graduates from outside the area.

Actions include:

- Investigate ways to provide degree level courses in Basingstoke in a flexible and affordable way
- Work with education providers to ensure that opportunities to explore non-academic skills and vocational training are widely available in the borough
- Promote the benefits of higher and further education to primary schools pupils through the creation of the Junioversity
- Organise a borough-wide careers fair

Priority objective 7: Ensure Basing View offers the right mix of accommodation, facilities and services

Its excellent location gives Basing View the potential to become an ideal location for businesses all of sizes. However, this can only be achieved if the accommodation offered is flexible and affordable to meets the needs of businesses and to enable them to grow.

The park will also need to provide a range of facilities and services companies need to run their business efficiently and to attract employees.

Actions include:

- Ensure there is provision for flexible and suitable accommodation on Basing View to suit businesses of different sizes
- Ensure the park offers a good range of facilities and services that are relevant and attractive to businesses and employees alike
- Explore the potential for setting up a convention bureau to attract small and medium scale conferences to the area

Priority objective 8: Explore the potential for the sustainable regeneration of Basing View

Reducing the carbon footprint of a company is important for tax, financial and environmental reasons. Green technologies can reduce costs, waste and pollution and for many companies is a vital part of their decision regarding location. In order to become a location of choice there needs to be a 'green' offer as part of the regeneration of Basing View.

In addition to green technologies transport is a key element of creating a sustainable business park. Providing a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to logistics on, off and around the park is a vital part of its offer. However, it is important to ensure that the park remains competitive with other business locations so a flexible approach to the use of cars needs to be considered.

There is currently no unique selling point for Basing View as there are many high quality business parks in the region. A sustainable park with a green offer could provide the unique quality the park needs for its marketing strategy.

Sustainable and green technologies provide an opportunity for specialised construction skills training through the Basing View regeneration.

Actions include:

- Develop an Interreg IVa Channel programme funding application to support the appraisal of sustainable regeneration opportunities
- Develop a comprehensive package of studies to assess the potential of turning Basing View into a "super green" and low carbon business area

Delivery of the Local Action Plan and funding

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will co-ordinate the delivery of the Local Action Plan and monitor progress. However, the vast majority of the actions included in this Local Action Plan will be delivered in partnership with the relevant stakeholders based on the nature and scope of the action. For example, some actions on skills development will be delivered by a partnership bringing together education providers, businesses, employment agency and an education and business charity.

Funding for the implementation of the Local Action Plan will be identified on a case by case basis. Some ESIMeC funding has been used to fund some background research on skills provision and perceptions and obstacles to careers in engineering. This research will help inform and develop some of the actions.

Some funding has already been secured to support the delivery of some specific actions. This include partnership funding and sponsorship for an event to promote engineering careers, European funding through the Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo Small Partnerships for a transnational project on the promotion of STEM subjects and careers in engineering as well as some ERDF funding through the Interreg IVA Channel programme for the implementation of a crossborder project focused on the sustainable regeneration of business parks.

Further funding will be sought including through the European Social Fund to support some of the actions on skills development and partnership funding both from the public and private sector.

Next steps

Delivery of the Local Action Plan has already started and some of the actions have been completed. These include setting up an Skills for Employment Action group who has already started working on identifying how employability skills can be improved and how best to engage employers in the process.

Work on raising the profile of STEM subjects and engineering careers is also already underway. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council secured some funding through the Lifelong Learning Programme to deliver a Leonardo Small Partnerships project called Engineering +, which aims to identify good practice and to develop a joint action plan for the promotion of STEM and engineering subjects and careers.

The implementation of an Interreg IVA Channel programme project called GreenFit has also already started. This project is focused on the sustainable regeneration of business parks and will run until 2015.

In terms of priority actions for the short term, these include:

- Develop a marketing campaign in partnership with Muse Development
- Analyse the findings of a skills provision mapping survey to identify gaps in provision
- Use the ESIMeC skills forecasting tool to start identifying on future skills needs
- Further the work of the Skills for Employment Action Group and foster business engagement
- Organise a borough-wide careers fair, planned for January 2012
- Implement the GreenFit and Engineering + projects

Conclusions

The participation of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in the ESIMeC project has proved very valuable and beneficial. In addition to a significant amount of learning generated through the transnational activities, Basingstoke and Deane has benefitted at local level. The development of the Local Action Plan has enabled the council and its partners to identify some key priorities in terms of skills and workforce development. It has also strengthened partnership working at local level by bringing together partners around a set of clearly defined issues and actions. It will help deliver better services as well as a better use of resources.



www.basingview.co.uk

Contact details

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For more information on Basingstoke, go to www.basingstoke.gov.uk

ESIMeC

ESIMeC (Economic Strategies and Innovation in Medium-sized Cities) is an URBACT II project which brings together **eight medium-sized cities** from across Europe to find **innovative approaches** to economic recovery, growth and resilience. The partners have placed their main asset, their **people**, at the heart of the project and define how **workforce development** and **demand-led skills provision** can be the main **drivers** for a thriving **local economy**.

For more information on ESIMeC go to <http://www.urbact.eu/esimec>



URBACT II

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 300 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

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