



## **Gedling Growth Strategy**

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## Executive Summary

Gedling Borough has considerable potential for economic growth. The 46 square miles which comprises the area has three distinct economic components:

- a major population base in the south west which links directly to Nottingham
- a “connected” north west segment which abuts the M1 and Hucknall at its top corner and
- a “sustainable rural” component in the east, with growth points based on Calverton and Ravenshead

There is currently a dislocation between the workforce in the Borough: which is highly skilled and commands high wages at place of work and the employment base in the Borough: which has a high proportion of part time jobs, offers lower wages and has a high proportion of small businesses.

***In very simple terms the challenge for Borough is to develop an employment base which has the capacity to satisfy the capabilities of its workforce.***

The key to addressing this challenge is to actively manage the economic relationship between Gedling and Nottingham. This process needs careful thinking in the context of the current spatial template for Gedling which envisages less employment land than the Greater Nottingham average for the Borough and a higher proportionate allocation of housing per head of population. This could involve going above the Aligned Core Strategy minimum allocation of employment land to promote better quality sites in a greater range of locations. There are particular opportunities in this context to consider developments in some of the Borough’s rural areas such as Calverton to build its potential as an exemplar sustainable settlement.

Perhaps the most significant current consequence of the development of a dormitory settlement economic profile for the most densely populated part of the Borough, is the relative emasculation of Arnold as a true service centre. The town has a population of over 40,000 which puts it on a par with many of the sub-regional service centres referenced in the LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan. It is clear however that at City, County and sub-regional level the settlement is largely overlooked.

The benefits which accrue to the Borough from access to the dynamic labour market of a national core city should not be taken lightly or seen in negative terms. There is already a well developed infrastructure agenda based on a possible fourth Trent crossing and the proposed Gedling Access Road which will enable the Borough to improve its employment site offer and compete more effectively for higher value employment. When the quality of this employment site offer was last assessed in 2007 poor access was one issue which led the area to be deemed to have a higher than average stock of less good employment sites in the Greater Nottingham area.

The identification of key growth opportunities (for housing and or employment) in Bestwood, Calverton, Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm site (adjacent Gedling Country Park), North of Papplewick Lane, Top Wighay Farm and Ravenshead all provide the potential for Gedling to strengthen its employment base. Where possible high quality employment should be encouraged as a means of retaining the high skilled workforce in the Borough.

There are a number of national examples of how strong suburban agendas have enabled settlements adjacent to large cities to thrive. Gateshead’s relationship with Newcastle and the relationship of Poole and Christchurch with Bournemouth are two very good examples.

In both cases the adjoining suburbs have evolved their neighbour city brand to stimulate investment in their own area. They have done this by identifying the key ingredients they bring to the area.

In Gedling such an approach could for example involve making the distinctive quality of Arnold as a service centre clear, promoting Calverton as a sustainable live/work rural centre, promoting the employment allocation in the Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm site adjacent to the Gedling Country Park as an area for high quality employment use, along with the Top Wighay Farm site.

The Council has a range of roles to play in this agenda. Recognising that none of the infrastructure and development aspirations will happen without active management it needs to develop and reinforce its current influencing strategies for the Gedling Access Road and 4<sup>th</sup> Trent Crossing. It needs to establish development briefs for its growth areas and actively promote them.

Externally the Council needs to strengthen its relationships with developers and the business forum. It needs to continue to work actively with the LEP, County and City groupings which cooperate around economic development. It needs to strengthen its role in terms of its account management of key established businesses and its intelligence of current operation of the land and property market. It needs to build a robust skills and employment agenda for the Borough building on its current work with FE providers.

Internally the Borough could adopt a “whole council” approach to economic development. This would involve a standing quarterly meeting on a council wide basis of all those involved in activities which contribute to economic development. Should the Borough wish to be more pro-active it could consider how best to use its own resources to further stimulate economic development including consideration of the potential to work with external bodies on key site development such as Nottingham Regeneration.

All of this activity could underpin the development of a new brand which makes it clear that Gedling is a key component of the Nottingham offer and is open for business and employment.

## Introduction

Gedling Borough Council commissioned Rose Regeneration to prepare a Growth Strategy as part of the Local Government Association Local Growth Adviser Programme in April 2014.

The commission had the following objectives:

- Firstly to provide advice and support with the drafting of the Growth Plan Strategy identifying models of good practice, and to help develop thinking around what is deliverable. This process was to be informed by the Aligned Core Strategy (with a timescale to 2028) and the D2N2 Growth Hub proposals (in the context of its European Strategic Investment Framework and its Strategic Economic Plan)
- Secondly, to work with officers to assess potential development sites, and to develop the Councils' expertise in understanding how these sites may be brought forward for development, in particular focusing on the funding of site development and overcoming blockages to growth.
- Thirdly, to help review the Councils existing processes with a view to maximising the potential of these, and potentially identifying areas where the Council could offer a better service to potential investors through working in partnership with other regeneration bodies
- Finally, to share the benefit of their experience in other areas with officers and partners.

## Our Approach

The development of this Growth Strategy involved the following activities to address the above objectives:

- A statistical analysis of the current economic performance and social context of Gedling. The two key documents used for this purpose are the Nomis Labour Market Profile of Gedling (April 2014) and the Local Futures District Profile of Gedling (July 2013).
- A series of interviews with key informants, to provide a qualitative assessment of the economic potential of Gedling. This included a meeting with key councilors and executives at the Council. Organisations interviewed included: Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Newark and Sherwood Council, Mansfield and Ashfield Councils Joint Economic Development Service, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LEP (D2N2) and two separate representatives of Gedling Business Partnership.
- A review of key strategies and policies relevant to the economic development of the Borough and a consideration of good practice in other areas pertinent to the development of Gedling. Key documents included: D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan and European Structural Investment Fund Plan (both March 2014), Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategy Employment Background Paper (June 2012); Greater Nottingham Housing Market and Economic Prospects Final Report (November 2012); Gedling

Local Planning Document – Issues and Options (October 2013); Nottingham City Region Employment Land Study – NCRELS - (January 2007); Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategies (Publication Version June 2012).

- A detailed site assessment process in relation to the key employment sites in the area. This involved a detailed series of specific on the ground site assessments, including a consideration of occupancy and condition and a follow up analysis to confirm usages.

## Our Findings

### *The Borough*

Gedling Borough Council covers 46 square miles. It stretches northwards from the A52 boundary with Nottingham City north of the city, spanning the A60 to the border with Mansfield and Ashfield, where it abuts the M1 at its western edge.

In the east it shares a boundary with Newark and Sherwood and Rushcliffe, where it encompasses 3 significant rural settlements, Burton Joyce, Calverton and Ravenshead.

The Borough has a population of 114,000 (ONS 2012 mid-year population estimates). The majority of the population is in the south west corner of the Borough, where it has one distinctive major town service centre: Arnold and a significant area of urban fringe connected to Nottingham: Carlton.

In addition to the work of the Borough Council, there is a tradition of "Greater Nottingham" planning and economic development (incorporating: Nottingham City, Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Erewash councils) alongside a county wide perspective for the area arising from the two tier local authority arrangements involving Nottinghamshire County Council.

There are structural fora at both the Greater Nottingham and Nottinghamshire level where economic development is discussed. At the Greater Nottingham level there is also a commitment to an alignment of core strategies by Broxtowe, Gedling and Nottingham City which have now reached an advanced stage of preparation and are expected to be adopted later this year.

Gedling does not have a single functioning economic geography. It does however have a Borough wide strong tradition of primary industry with a significant number of its settlements having been former mining communities – these include Bestwood, Calverton, Gedling and Newstead.

The other persistent theme in the economic life of the area is its proximity to the City of Nottingham. The economic diversity provided by this core City has meant that the collapse of the coal mining industry has had a less grievous impact than that faced by other boroughs to the north and west.

It is useful to consider the economic context of Gedling in three discrete segments, the urban fringe area comprising Arnold and Carlton, with an important recognition of the economic significance of Arnold as a specific town; directly above this urban area in the west an area most akin to other former mining settlements bounded by Hucknall and Mansfield/Ashfield. Finally to the east of the A60 a more distinctly rural area with three significant service centres around: Burton Joyce, Calverton and Ravenshead.

## Economy at a Glance

Gedling has a promising economic profile, which is very significantly affected by the “economic pull” of Nottingham. At a glance its economic profile is as follows:

Indicator – Workforce (ONS mid year est 2012)	Gedling	Region	GB
Economic Activity	78.2	77.5	77.4
<b>Occupational Profile (2011 Census)</b>			
Professionals	50.4	40.4	44.1
Admin	24.5	21.5	21.5
Caring/Sales	16.3	16.3	17.1
Process/Elementary	8.8	21.7	17.3
<b>Qualifications (2011 Census)</b>			
NVQ4	33.2	29	34.4
NVQ3	56.3	52	55.1
NVQ2	74.7	70	71.8
NVQ1	86.4	83.8	84
<b>Earnings (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2013)</b>			
By Residence	501.9	483.4	518.1
By Workplace	541	474	517.8
<b>Unemployment (DWP 2014)</b>			
Unemployment	2.4	2.6	2.7
<b>Jobs (Business Register and Employment Survey 2012)</b>			
Job Density	0.45	0.75	0.78
Full Time Jobs	61	66.9	67.2
Part Time Jobs	39	33.1	32.8
<b>Sectors (Business Register and Employment Survey 2012)</b>			
Primary (A-B: ag/mining)	0.8	0.5	0.3
Energy & Water (D-E)	1.6	1.2	1.1
Manufacturing (C)	12.9	13.8	8.7
Construction (F)	6.6	4.3	4.5
Services (G-S)	78.1	80.2	85.5
Wholesale & retail (G)	20.6	17.8	16.1
Transport storage (H)	3.7	5.2	4.6
Accom & food (I)	6.2	5.6	6.9
ICT (J)	1.2	2.0	3.9
Financial/bus (K-N)	9.6	17.4	21.5
P Ad, Ed & Health (O-Q)	32.9	28.0	28.1
<b>Businesses (Business Register and Employment Survey 2012)</b>			
Micro (0 to 9)	88.9	87.6	88.2
Small (10 to 49)	9.2	10.2	9.7
Medium (50 to 249)	1.4	1.8	1.7
Large (250+)	0.5	0.4	0.4

In summary this profile indicates that Gedling has:

- Better levels of economic activity – than the regional and national averages
- Significantly higher levels of high skilled workers – than the regional and national averages
- Significantly higher levels of NVQ 4 - than the regional averages
- Significantly higher wages at workplace than the regional and national averages and at residence than the regional average
- Lower unemployment – than the regional and national averages
- A higher proportion of part time jobs than the regional and national averages
- Very low job density – according to “local futures” in the bottom 40% of all Districts nationally<sup>1</sup>
- A higher proportion of public sector workers than the national average.
- Higher numbers of small businesses(including micro businesses) – with more robust survival rates than the national average<sup>2</sup>

## Analysis

This statistical profile clearly establishes the relationship between the Borough and Nottingham City. The very low job density reflects the fact there is significant workforce commuting to Nottingham. The economic significance of Nottingham is further reinforced by the higher wages at workplace than residence in the economic profile of the Borough.

A key issue which needs to be addressed in the economic development of Gedling is the relationship between the Borough and the City of Nottingham. Currently trends are likely to continue its role as a cluster of dormitory settlements.

The housing completions for the three local authorities, which have aligned strategies point to a higher proportion of houses in Gedling than in Nottingham and Broxtowe as follows:

Area	New Houses 2011-28	Population	Population/ New Houses
Broxtowe	6152	110,700	18
Gedling	7,250	114,100	16
Nottingham	17,150	308,700	18

The NCRELS study provides broadly useful data which indicates that Gedling is amongst the least well-endowed districts in Greater Nottingham in terms of employment sites and has a higher proportion of employment sites which are less “market ready” in terms of relative attractiveness than a number of other districts. This can be seen in the table below<sup>3</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> Gedling District Economic Profile – Local Futures July 2013

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Nottingham City Region Employment Land Study – NCRELS - (January 2007)

District	Ha	Condition of Sites			
	Total	VG	G	Av	P
Broxtowe	138	0	83%	16%	1%
Erewash	240	0	1%	96%	4%
Gedling	177	0	23%	75%	2%
Nottingham	623	1%	73%	20%	7%
Rushcliffe	216	0	70%	30%	1%

The proposed aligned core strategies for the three local authorities identify the lowest amount of employment space for Gedling (10ha) of the three (Broxtowe (15ha) and Nottingham (12ha) going forward to 2028, although this is a minimum figure and there may be scope to bring a greater amount of employment land forward in the Borough.

The context is that the manufacturing base in Greater Nottingham is forecast to continue declining. The net requirement for manufacturing space is less than the existing supply. The allocations were distributed on the basis of each Council's share of the supply. There is an argument in the light of the relatively modest initial proposed allocation for the Borough for going above these minimums to improve the quality of sites and to increase the employment base to match the capabilities of the workforce.<sup>4</sup>

The tight economic linkages between Nottingham and Gedling are not a bad thing per se. The statistical profile above demonstrates the significant workforce benefits which accrue to Gedling residents from proximity to the large dynamic labour market of a core City. Whilst by far the largest current concentration of employment is adjacent to the City at the Colwick industrial estate, it is also interesting to note that both Calverton and Top Wighay Farm which are significant areas allocated for housing and employment growth respectively, are very separate from the City and provide a good opportunity to develop a distinctive "Gedling" brand and identity. Whilst there are currently no employment allocations planned for Calverton this situation is worth revisiting in the context of the evolution of the ACS.

As an associated task linked to the development of this Growth Plan we examined the employment land offer within the Borough in some detail. Two "on the ground" nuances arose from this work. Firstly the significant private sector office market which has become established in Arnold and secondly the importance of the A60 north of the City in shaping impressions of Arnold in detail and Gedling more generally as a business location.

The former finding is a strength which could be built on the latter a challenge, particularly in terms of the poor state of the employment premises to the west of the A60 in Daybrook. There may be opportunities for the Council to make some useful strategic acquisitions along the A60, for example in the context of the ambulance station on Salop Street. These would not only help improve the visual image of the area, but provide scope for the development of further office space to bolster the work of the private sector in developing this market.

A number of new and planned infrastructure developments at different levels of progress also provide scope for the development of both stronger linkages with the City and the development of a distinctive Gedling brand. These include: the LEP supported proposals for the opening up of the employment land at Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm Country Park, through the Gedling Access Road and the longer term but strategically supported (including by the LEP) proposals for a new Trent Crossing in Colwick.

## SWOT

Taking the economic profile of the area and the analysis arising from it the following SWOT has been prepared in conjunction with staff at the Borough Council:

<sup>4</sup> Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategies (Publication Version June 2012).

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High economic activity rates – 3% above national average</li> <li>• Higher Proportion of Managers and Professional Occupations – 10% above national average</li> <li>• Higher level qualifications NVQ3 &amp; 4 on a par with national average</li> <li>• Earnings by workplace 5% above national average</li> <li>• Average 3 bed semi highly affordable £160k</li> <li>• 4.2% more manufacturing jobs and 2.1% more construction jobs than the national average</li> <li>• Strategic Planning Joint Member and officer working arrangements (Joint Planning Advisory Board)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earning by residence 3% below the national average</li> <li>• Job Density (ratio jobs to working population) 33% below the national average</li> <li>• Full time employee jobs 6% below the national average</li> <li>• No brand awareness as a location – seen as part of Nottingham</li> <li>• Pockets of significant deprivation some in former coalfield areas, but more widely distributed across the borough.</li> <li>• Not homogenous – Nottingham fringe (south), former coalfield (north and west), rural (east)</li> <li>• 56% fewer jobs in finance and business services than the national average</li> <li>• Public transport in many rural settlements is not good and access to jobs by public transport from rural areas poor.</li> <li>• No local Higher Education offer.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to one of the 8 English Core Cities</li> <li>• Great Infrastructure: M1, E Midlands Airport, less than 2 hours from London by train</li> <li>• Potential for a further Trent Crossing to the east of Nottingham between the Holme Pierrepont area and the Colwick Industrial Estate improving accessibility and revitalising the industrial estate.</li> <li>• Nottingham City Council has imposed a Work Place Parking Levy (£362 for a space 2014/15), which makes employment space proportionally more attractive and less expensive in Gedling, particularly in view of its proximity to the city.</li> <li>• Travel to Work population of 2.1 million – 4 million people within 1 hour drive</li> <li>• 30 minutes from 2 world class Universities, two nationally significant hospitals, Medi Park and Nottingham Science Park and 1 hour from 7 Universities</li> <li>• Skilled workforce which is considerably larger than current job stock</li> <li>• Lower commercial land and office prices than adjoining cities</li> <li>• NCRELS refers to the east of Nottingham having scope to attract smaller occupiers prepared to be more flexible in location.</li> <li>• Opportunity to attract relocating firms from City regeneration zones</li> <li>• High quality rural environment with sustainable settlements and scope for growth</li> <li>• Planned sustainable urban extensions to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of an economy which is externally dominated by the City of Nottingham</li> <li>• Relatively smaller stock of employment land and premises than adjoining areas</li> <li>• Industrial/warehousing sites are less accessible than sites to the west of Nottingham</li> <li>• No indigenous H/FE facilities</li> <li>• Challenges facing retail core in Arnold Town Centre</li> <li>• 4.8% more public service employees than the national average</li> <li>• Relatively unbalanced economic profile in terms of the distribution of jobs within economic sectors overall</li> <li>• Part time jobs 7% above the national average</li> </ul>



<p>the Nottingham Principal Urban Area and Hucknall Sub Regional Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arnold Town Centre retail, leisure, cultural offer and potential to enhance this role</li> </ul>	
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## Strategic Considerations

D2N2 LEP have identified a number of sectoral priorities for their Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and we have aligned our recommendations with these. We also believe in view of the varied economic geography in Gedling Borough that there are a number of spatially focused priorities for development which should be addressed and these form a second discrete part of our recommendations. Finally there are a number of organizationally important considerations to consider by way of implementation. We have set these out in a discrete section within the recommendations.

### LEP Action Plan (SEP)

Whilst the SEP does not make a direct reference to “landmark” projects in Gedling the key listing of priorities set out below provides a useful framework for connecting up the strategic opportunities to take the economy of Gedling forward with what is now the strategic overarching framework for economic development in the Gedling sub-region. Its focus is as follows:

#### Infrastructure – Increasing connectivity

- Masterplan for the proposed HS2 station, to enable early work on infrastructure and a connectivity package to ensure improved connectivity across the D2N2 area
- Midland Main Line upgrading and electrification
- East Midlands Airport growth cluster
- Urban mass transit strategy
- Transport majors programme
- Locally focused integrated transport programmes
- Superfast broadband delivering global business opportunities
- Our city, our river – unlocking economic potential along the Lower Derwent

#### Accelerating Development

- A major sites programme in partnership with HCA
- Accelerating delivery at significant employment sites, such as the Enterprise Zones (both Nottingham and Markham/Vale), Infinity Park, Chesterfield Waterside, Rolls Royce – Hucknall, Lindhurst Development, Vertical Park, Cotgrave Colliery, Newark
- Accelerate the delivery of new homes

#### Business-led Growth and Innovation

- BioSciences – including new development at BioCity and MediCity
- Creative Quarter in Nottingham providing opportunities for SMEs
- Planes, Trains and Automobiles – Institute of Sustainable Transport
- Engineering, rail training centre
- Low Carbon Action Plan
- A network of advanced innovation and incubation facilities targeted at our priority sectors
- Universities at the hub of economic delivery

#### Employment and Skills – Be All You Can Be

- Increasing competitiveness through a D2N2 Skills Deal
- A 20% increase in apprenticeship starts
- D2N2 Employability Charter
- The D2N2 Escalator to Employment (including traineeships)
- Roll-out of a sustainable Apprenticeship Hub model across D2N2
- Nottingham City Centre (Broadmarsh East) Skills Hub
- The HS2 Academy
- A new campus at Basford Hall

## The Gedling Agenda

### Infrastructure

The Borough has a clear large scale infrastructure “ask” – this involves the delivery of the Gedling Access Road and the provision of a new Trent crossing at Colwick. The case has already been made for both proposals and they both have the support of the LEP and the broad-scale support of the County Council as the strategic transport authority.

***A clear process for influencing the progression of these opportunities needs to be agreed from an internal Borough perspective. Considerable progress has already been made in this context in relation to the Gedling Access Road, which is the subject of a partnership agreement and steering arrangements.***

### Accelerating Development

The Borough has clear growth aspirations for the key Settlements of Calverton, Bestwood Village and Ravenshead and sustainable urban extensions are planned for Teal Close, and Top Wighay Farm. Masterplans have been prepared for each key



Settlement and these will inform the Local Plan (part 2) now being prepared.

***It is important to ensure that there are clear delivery plans for each of these areas in terms of both housing and employment (where practical) and that the LEP and other key strategic partners formally acknowledge them in their plans. These plans should add value to the traditional process of preparing development briefs. They should identify very clearly proposed timescales and approaches to bringing development forward, including mechanisms for stimulating and supporting development, setting out clearly the role of public sector partners as facilitators.***

The Economic Development Officer has identified a number of opportunities and key partners in terms of the two areas work set out above as follows:

Areas of identified opportunity include:

- The 4<sup>th</sup> Trent Crossing
- The GAR
- Funding from the LEP
- Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Vacant Property Database
- Website

#### **Key Partners**

- D2N2
- HCA
- Nottingham County Council
- Nottingham City Council and Neighbouring Districts/Boroughs
- Communications team
- Eastside regeneration

#### **Business-led Growth and Innovation**

Gedling has a relatively small stock of jobs and high proportion of small businesses. These businesses are more resilient than national norms, the Borough has lower levels of births and deaths than the England and Wales average. There are no distinctive economic sectors in Gedling although construction does employ a higher proportion of the workforce than the national average as does the public sector.

There is a good networking tradition in Gedling through the work of the business partnership and there is scope to build on this engagement.

Gedling needs to consider how best to work with its key employers, identifying and supporting key businesses which are relevant to the priority sectors identified by the LEP (Transport Equipment Manufacturing, Bio-Science, Construction, Food and Drink, Visitor Economy and Low Carbon Goods and Services). Secondly a programme of work to identify and understand the most effective operators within the small business population in the Borough (in view of its scale) is very important.

***It is anticipated that the LEP will commission support for key sectors at the sub-regional level and the process of ensuring Gedling firms fully participate in and benefit from this support is another important priority for the Borough. In this context, in view of the scale of the sector, a good starting point would be to explore the priority actions planned by the LEP in terms of projects to support the construction sector.***

The Economic Development Officer at the Borough has identified an important agenda in this context and is currently engaged in the following initiatives. Areas of identified opportunity include (we have indicated a relative level of priority for them (H- High, M – Medium, L- Low) based on the development of this plan):

- Gedling Business Partnership –workplan (M)
- Identifying businesses seeking to expand (M)
- Colwick Business park and long term Enterprise Zone vision (M)
- Provision of employment land through the Local Plan including provision of small scale serviced office space (H)
- Locality work in 3 areas of Gedling (L)
- Signposting to business support services
- Information from the Employment and skills group (H)
- Recruit Local - Careers Fairs (L)
- Local Employment agreements (L)
- Developing a rural business support offer, linked to the LEP and LEADER (M)
- Advertising Vacancies on Council Website (L)
- Supporting the roll out of apprenticeship placements (M)
- Improvements to Town Centres/Shopping Centres – (H)
- Investing the potential offered by the low carbon economy in the context of Gedling (L)
- Unemployed skilled graduates – opportunity to increase entrepreneurial business start ups (H)
- Policy and development control – pre application briefings and planning briefings (H)
- Investigate the use of CIL funds for Arnold Town Centre (M)

#### **Key Partners**

- Gedling Business Partnership
- The developer forum
- Colwick Business Park
- Nottingham Business Venture (NBV)
- Ingeus
- Employments and skills group
- Central College
- Schools
- Other FE establishments
- Nottingham Business Venture
- Futures
- Neighbouring Districts
- Locality co-ordinators

## Employment and Skills

Gedling already has a highly skilled workforce. Currently work is underway to build stronger relationships between employers and the FE sector and this should be sustained, focusing on those pockets of greatest need in the Borough.

As indicated in a number of places in this document the local business base is less dynamic than that in the City. People who work locally earn lower wages, there are more small businesses and there is significant out-commuting by the workforce to other locations.

***It is important therefore to better understand the operation of the employment and skills agenda amongst local employers. The current employment and skills project being operated by the Borough will provide some interesting insights into this issue, these will helpfully supplement the findings in the recently refreshed Employment and Skills Plan. Key themes such as the employment of graduates and investment by local businesses in skills and training need to be clearly understood and supported in the context of the Borough.***

In view of the connectivities between Gedling and Nottingham the lack of a direct F/HE presence in the Borough is not a problem per se. The development of a potentially very high quality employment offer as part of the evolution of the Gedling Country Park does lend itself however to a consideration of the provision of high quality learning space. This is a particularly important issue for Gedling as the lack of any indigenous F/HE gives it a comparative disadvantage compared to other similar sized authorities in terms of the training and development of its workforce.

Work is already underway by the Economic Development Officer and colleagues to address the employment and skills agenda. This involves:

***Developing local training and employment activities to improve the employment prospects of Gedling residents, including promoting opportunities for young people not in education, employment or training – including working with the Employment and Skills Partnership***

Areas of identified opportunity include:

- Recruit Local
- Careers Fairs
- Development of the employments and skills group
- Local Employment agreements
- Rural as well as urban
- Advertising Vacancies on Council Website
- Involvement in talent match
- Apprentice placements
- Looking at the worst wards in Gedling with 10% youth unemployment

- Tracking the “not knowns”
- Co-ordinated approach between key partners
- Reduction of duplication
- Value for money
- Ability to explore new ideas

## Key Partners

- Further education Establishments
- Schools
- Job Centre Plus
- Nottingham Business Venture
- Work Programme Providers
- Groundwork Nottingham
- Futures
- Neighbouring Districts
- Locality co-ordinators

## Spatial Opportunities

There are a number of compelling and distinctive cases which can be made for settlements in the Borough and they need to be codified and plans put in place to animate them.

**Arnold** – could be argued to be the largest distinctive service centre in the sub-region to have no profile in the thinking of the LEP. Taking the 7 key wards which radiate from it (Bonnington, Daybrook, Killisick, Kingsmill, Mapperly Planes, St Mary's and Woodthorpe) it has a population of 42,000. This puts it on a par with settlements such as Newark, Worksop, Buxton and Matlock, which have a discrete footprint in the SEP. The spatial context of Arnold and its proximity to Nottingham explains its relatively low individual economic profile in part. There are strong arguments however that it is a clear and distinctive town centre and there is real merit economically in seeking to raise its profile.

**The establishment of a town plan which clearly sets out a development agenda for Arnold is very important to realizing the full economic potential of the largest and most distinctive urban settlement in the Borough. This plan should start with a clear vision for the settlement and identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing it as a specific settlement. A detailed development brief could be established downstream from such a document.**

**Two areas of particular potential are the currently underperforming but still spatially impressive market place in the town centre and the enhancement of the A60 corridor in Daybrook.**

**Calverton** – is one of three key settlements for economic growth identified in the Local Plan. It's distinctive “offer” is based on the fact that unlike the other two settlements (Ravenshead and Bestwood Village) it has a very strong employment base.

**There is real scope to promote Calverton as a very sustainable rural “live-work” location, benefiting from significant amenity value associated with its proximity to Sherwood Forest to the north and the City of Nottingham to the south. An investment strategy for the area should be developed for promotion to investors and house builders to maximize the potential of this settlement.**

**Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm**– The current employment allocation supported by a very good prospect of the development of a major new access road provides scope for the creation of a high quality employment use on this site as it would adjoin the Gedling Country Park. **Whilst the employment provision at the site, is yet to be ascertained it provides a good opportunity to do something distinctive and high value- perhaps in conjunction with an F/HE provider to help build the knowledge intensive business base in the Borough.** Should the Borough undertake any direct development to stimulate key sectors through for example the provision of managed workspace this would be an excellent site.

**Top Wighay Farm** – This is by far the greatest future area proposed for development in the County. **It is important that the Borough participates in the establishment of a clear time-bound implementation plan to bring it forward.** There is also a need to be clear on the role and nature of the employment allocation, taking account of the views of Nottinghamshire County Council who own the site. The Nottingham City Region Employment Land Study identified this employment site with frontage to the A611 to be good quality for B1 and B8. Notwithstanding the reservations of adjoining districts it should be pursued on the basis that it brings a new and distinctive aspect to the Borough’s employment offer

**Additional Growth** - Should there be a real appetite to increase the current allocation of employment land, the most promising locations would be in Calverton and north of Arnold. In Calverton there is currently no clearly identified potential site. The fact the area already has a good employment offer and scope to accommodate additional housing makes it a promising candidate for an enhanced rural “live/work” area. The Leapool area north of Arnold contains an attractive area of land, linking directly to the A60 which has the potential not only to support employment but potentially the development of a Park and Ride facility for the City of Nottingham.

**Gedling Brand** – In view of the extremely strong link with the City of Nottingham and its natural consequences, a limited profile for the main service centre in the Borough (Arnold) and a growing dormitory role for the south and east of the district, based on its residential attraction for Nottingham employees, direct action needs to be taken to positively manage these issues.

There are a number of very positive examples of “suburban” districts which have developed a beneficial

economic relationship with their adjoining cities. Perhaps the best example is “Gateshead/Newcastle” where proximity to Newcastle has enabled Gateshead to drive forward the development of: the Angel of the North, Metro-Centre, the Sage and Baltic visitor attractions. In the wider Bournemouth urban envelope, Poole is home to the “University of Bournemouth” and the District of Christchurch to “Bournemouth Airport.”

The effective spatial and economic alignment, which in both of the above examples, has strengthened the employment base of the area (an issue which clearly needs to be addressed in the context of “Gedling/Nottingham”), has been carefully planned. In the case of both Poole and Gateshead there has been a focused effort to make a virtue of proximity to a bigger city neighbour. This is the most effective way for Gedling to move forward in terms of its economic potential. Such an approach needs to be sufficiently subtle to ensure the other distinctive areas of the Gedling “offer” its “connected component” in the north west and “sustainable rural component” in the east are not lost. It is also important not to simply characterise the district as a cheaper alternative to development in the City.

**We have already identified the sectoral, workforce and spatial agendas which could underpin the development of the brand above. A cohesive campaign of action to build them into a coherent investment strategy is the best way of building the Gedling brand.**

## ***Implementation***

There are a number of activities which can be pursued to ensure that the investment opportunities in Gedling are brought to fruition.

### ***A Well Charted Direction of Travel***

The first action is to chart them out clearly, with precise SMART plans setting out the Council’s role in achieving them and its priorities for influencing others.

The priorities are as follows:

**Major infrastructure** – plans setting out the role of the Borough in bringing the Gedling Access Road and 4th Trent Crossing to fruition. Whilst there is a partnership strategy in place for the Gedling Access Road there is merit in reviewing the delivery assumptions and timescales for the development and ensuring that they are given a current and regularly reviewed high priority.

**Accelerating development** – plans setting out the role of the Borough in achieving its investment aspirations in:

- Calverton as an exemplar “Live/Work” rural service centre,
- Ravenshead
- Bestwood Village
- Top Wighay Farm

- Supporting the growth and economic development of Hucknall
- Arnold setting out its economic potential as a significant service centre.
- Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm adjacent the Country Park as a location for high quality employment use

Experience of stimulating development through economic intervention in local authority areas identifies, that without market guidance at least and often direct intervention development aspirations are rarely realized in the form desired. Settlement masterplans provide a very important overarching template to guide development however the process of working pro-actively to stimulate that development, potentially in partnership with public/private sector investment vehicle requires more detailed work and planning. We identify the potential to initiate such an approach further on in this strategy.

**Business led Growth and Innovation** – plans to ensure take up of LEP commissioned support for Gedling's businesses are maximized, along with detailed discussions about the scope to make Gedling a key location in the construction sector business support work planned by the LEP.

**Employment and Skills** – plans setting out the role of the Borough in ensuring its employers are effectively benefitting from the labour force strengths of the Borough (which are considerable) and that those sectors of the community challenged with low skills and limited employment opportunities are supported.

**Brand** - The aggregation of all these activities into a coherent overall economic development agenda for Gedling will provide the potential to establish a dynamic and value adding brand for the Borough.

### ***Dynamic Partnerships***

There are already well established links with developers and businesses in the Borough. These need to be reviewed and refreshed to generate positive engagement with the plans proposed above. The private sector (from our discussions with key informants) is clearly enthusiastic about supporting the potential of the area. They could be engaged in helping with the drafting and considering the implementation of the investment plans.

One approach could involve the creation of development briefs for key sites to stimulate detailed discussions between the Borough and potential investors.

The LEP is key to this approach with its strategic overview of ERDF and ESF funds and resources directed towards accelerating housing and employment development. It also has a key role in supporting the development of funding proposals for the Regional Growth Fund and other competitive forms of public investment which can stimulate economic growth at the individual company level.

The Council is also able to resource economic development in its own right. In addition to allocating resources from direct revenue raising activities it is also able to use new homes bonus and localized business rates to support economic development. It also has scope to develop approaches such as Local Asset Based Vehicles (using its established resources) either directly or in partnership with others to bring forward development.

It is not essential for the Borough to form a new investment vehicle, should it decide to progress down this route. There are opportunities to enter into a dialogue with established regeneration companies, such as "Nottingham Regeneration" for example. An investment approach for each of the priorities identified in this strategy, setting out scope for regeneration (EU and LEP), public (Council) and private funds should be prepared by the Borough. This should be done in concert with the LEP and County Council, key private sector representatives based in the district and if appropriate potential regeneration partners such as Nottingham Regeneration.

### ***Day to Day Delivery***

The Council has just committed itself to the recruitment of a new economic development team to build on the current resource it has for the service. There is scope to achieve a high impact, in the context of the new priority allocated to economic development by generating synergies across the Borough's departments.

This could be characterized as a "whole council" approach to economic development. Should a plan underpinning a development brand be established on the basis proposed in this report, there is real merit in considering the creation of a corporate economic development officer meeting (to be held potentially on a quarterly basis, to focus and review the Borough's collegiate approach to economic development).

A number of activities are particularly important areas of focus for Economic Development. These are based on maximizing local intelligence and relationships with the current private sector and influencing the work of internal colleagues and external partners to maximize the economic development output of the Borough.

Key areas of focus should be:

- Supporting the ongoing operation of Gedling Business Partnership,
- Implementation of an account management role linked to a regular sequence of visits to the main private sector businesses in the Borough,
- Establishment of an up to date register of employment space and establishment of an ongoing dialogue with key developers both directly and potentially interested in the Borough, particularly those which own established employment premises and assets
- Pro-active management of a dialogue about economic development with: internal

colleagues; the LEP; key local authority partners in Greater Nottingham and the County Council.

have submitted a series of promotional concepts around the idea of “4G Gedling”.

## Summary

There is scope for a dynamic growth agenda in Gedling Borough. It requires the following activities to bring it to fruition:

**Infrastructure Plans** setting out the Borough’s role in delivering the 4<sup>th</sup> Trent Crossing and recognising the importance of the current delivery plan for the Gedling Access Road (with thinking about the potential for a high quality employment use in relation to the land allocated at the Country Park).

**Development Briefs** for the delivery of employment and housing at: Calverton (as a rural live/work exemplar), Bestwood Village and Ravenshead to build on the current masterplans established for these settlements within the Borough’s Local Planning Document, and for Top Wighay Farm and Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm (subject to a planning application).

A Town Plan, setting out the potential and raising the profile of Arnold as a regionally significant settlement.

**A Business Support Strategy** – seeking to maximize the take up of LEP directed resources by Gedling firms, undertaking a series of ongoing account management relationships with key businesses and maintaining a property database which provides scope for a dialogue with developers about matching the supply of employment sites and premises with demand.

**A Skills and Employment Plan** – which identifies key priorities for action in terms of: meeting the skills demands of employers and addressing the skills deficits of those pockets of underperformance in the labour force.

**A Delivery Strategy** – which comprises:

- a structured relationship with Greater Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Partners,
- a structured relationship with the LEP,
- continued support for the developer and business fora in the Borough,
- an internal corporate economic development meeting structure,
- a clear strategic internal position on the use of the Borough’s own resources to stimulate economic development
- and if and when appropriate a formal relationship with an economic development delivery body.

**A New Brand** - All of this activity could underpin the development of a new brand which makes it clear that notwithstanding its symbiotic relationship with the City Gedling complements the Nottingham offer (and more) and is open for business and employment as a key area in its own right. As a separate document we