

**JOINT REGENERATION SERVICES EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
DAY 7th March 2008**

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK ON IDENTIFIED ISSUES

- 1. Economic Development**
- 2. Access to Grants**
- 3. Access to Visitor Accommodation**
- 4. Promotion of Peak District to BME groups**
- 5. Arts opportunities**
- 6. Pricing policies**
- 7. Festivals Plan**
- 8. Translation of information**
- 9. Transport**

1. Economic Development

Issues raised:

- Most economic regeneration initiatives in the area are directed to the market towns. Is the rural area disadvantaged? From an HPBC perspective there are grants to support economic regeneration, business development and skills development which cover all rural areas of HP & DD. Current top 4 priorities in the High Peak are focused on market towns (2 Buxton, 1 Whaley, 1 Glossop) however there are other economic regen projects which cover both rural and market towns.
- The 'creative industries' offer an opportunity for regeneration of rural areas. **HPBC: Important that we don't stereotype business in rural areas – our rural areas currently have a range of businesses from creative business, tourism, through to ICT specialists. Yes creative industries have an important role to play, but they are not the entire picture.**
- Poor access to Broadband and mobile phone signals is a drawback for rural businesses and residents. **HPBC: 100% of High Peak & DD now have broadband access. Since 2006 98% of Derbyshire had full broadband availability and the remaining 2% 'not spot' has now been resolved to give 100% availability. There some grants**

to help people in this rural community get the equipment they need & even pay for free period of subscription- in the area which was previously classified as a not spot. (see HPBC website). In addition, there are a range of grants for businesses which they can access to contribute towards cost of e-technology – from ICT equipment to VoIP; and other mobile technology. See www.highpeak.gov.uk/business.

HPBC: Mobile signals can be more limited – but this depends on your supplier. We also have to balance this against the issue of putting telephone masts in area of outstanding beauty.

- More investment is needed in village halls to widen their use

HPBC : This isn't really a comment which relates to economic development – as widening village hall use will not increase jobs and prosperity (the underpinning concept behind economic regeneration). – this comment should be moved to community cohesion/involvement.

Village halls could be used for training, meetings etc, and upper floors could even be converted for business use but it is important that the owners of the buildings take ownership of their own objectives Village hall 'owners' (often parish council) need to firstly agree what they want to use their facilities for, and then seek funding/assistance to secure this investment as required. There are sources of funding available, depending on what people want to do, and the councils teams could assist with plans if appropriate. E.g. if upper floors were looking to be converted for business use, eco development officers, business link and CVS could work with them to access grants for this conversion

- The efforts of the Voluntary sector are essential to the survival of rural services.
- Both the government's criteria used to measure Multiple Deprivation and the RDA's emphasis on new projects achieving high numerical outputs to qualify for grants overlook the needs of rural areas.

HPBC: We have accessed a wide range of RDA devolved grants – including the new Leader LDS which bring grants to even our smallest communities. Of greater concern perhaps is that there is a continued narrow definition of outputs – which don't recognise things outcomes (or the impact), of actions which for example increase income to the local economy (which in turn supports jobs generated by more profitable businesses)

e.g. focus on job outputs, private sector investment, rather than income generated for local economy.

We fully support the new toolkits developed to measure the economic value of the public realm and economic value of culture as these help us evidence the outcome/impact but the impact of projects needs to be fully weighted in the scoring mechanism for project appraisal so that temporary outputs are not over emphasised. * Please note that this is something that NEF are fully endorsing (see Measuring what Matters research)

- The market towns serve the rural areas and provide the most cost effective locations for new development.
- Transport is a major issue and is discussed as a separate issue below.

Actions:

- Ensure that an Equality Impact Assessment is built into the development of the planning Core Strategy
- That priorities in regeneration strategies continue to review the needs of all communities to ensure that both rural and market town communities needs are met.

2. Access to Grants

Issues raised:

- Evidence of non monitoring at High Peak and non-monitoring at Derbyshire Dales
- DDEP have a robust assessment criteria
- Monitoring needs to be consistent and proportionate to £.
- Timescales are often too tight, small community groups can find it difficult to complete application forms on time.
- Advice to groups on applications essential – Derbyshire Rural Community Council/CVS offer assistance.
- Availability of grants should be more accessible to all.

Actions:

- Implement an appropriate monitoring system for community fund grants relative to the size of grants in HPBC
- Review timescales for submission of applications to Community Fund in HPBC
- Ensure that guidance is available on how to get advice and support on applying for grants

3. Access to Visitor Accommodation

Issues raised:

- The scope of the National Accessible Scheme is limited; costs to be inspected which is an additional cost to that of Quality in Tourism or AA grading
- The above does not apply to all disabilities.
- Confusion over whether “Gay Friendly” logo is universally applied; some Providers use, some don’t, making it difficult for gay couples to know if they are welcome

- Is excluding uninspected accommodation from the accommodation offer in the Peak District and Derbyshire restricting access to low cost holidays?
- Improved access to better public toilets is needed, as are facilities within visitor accommodation

Actions:

- **HPBC is implementing a programme of public toilet refurbishment to ensure all toilets are fully accessible.**
- **Ask the Destination management Partnership to look at the accuracy of data covering access to accommodation**
- **Seek specialist advice on the use of 'gay friendly' logo from Derbyshire Friend**

4. Promotion of Peak District to BME groups

Issues raised:

- There is a perception that BME groups are under-represented in the profile of visitors to the Peak District
- This is an issue for the DMP to discuss
- More research and evidence is needed
- Could a special cultural event be held in the Peak District to promote the area to BME groups? – link to PDNPA Mosaic project and other work they have done both with inner city schools and also Somali community

Actions:

5. Arts Opportunities

Issues raised:

- After school clubs/activities should be made available to all children
- Resources need targeting at disadvantaged groups
- Links to LAA Cultural block
- There is a need for robust data to establish better information on any inequalities in arts provision.

Actions:

- Collect and analyse data from the Arts Council, Derbyshire Arts or Citizens Panel to establish evidence of excluded groups

6. Pricing Policies

Issues raised:

- Access to arts activities needs to be affordable to all to be accessible to all.
Other ways of funding should be investigated e.g. donations.
- Matlock Bath Illuminations pricing policy. Does it compare with other festivals/events? e.g. children under 16 free
- People are willing to pay for a good quality performance
- In setting a policy other issues e.g. accessibility, quality, parking and information need to be considered.
- Buxton Opera House pricing structure does not encourage OAP and unwaged groups. – they can get limited £5 on the day tickets
- Buxton Opera House - seat cost for hearing impaired visitor is too high
- A consistent approach across the county to pricing discounts should be considered.

Actions:

- HPBC to raise the issue of pricing policy of Buxton Opera House as part of the review of partnership arrangements
- HPBC to raise the issue of physical accessibility with Buxton Opera House (**High Peak BC is working closely with the Opera House to re-develop a second venue at Pavilion Gardens (Paxton Suite) which would be fully accessible.**)

7. Festivals Plan

Issues raised:

- Is access to festivals the responsibility of the organisers or the Local Authority.
- Festivals should be able to provide An Access Policy on demand.
- Should Emergency Planning be involved in the organising of festivals?
- Arts Derbyshire Festival Toolkit includes advice on access and equalities

8. Translation of Information

Issues raised:

- Is there a need for promotional material for tourism and other regeneration services to be printed in foreign languages?
- At present both DDDC and HPBC produce English only publications but offer translation services on request. This was considered by the meeting as adequate. Government policy also supports this approach.
- Language used should be accessible. There is still far too much jargon in local authority publications/ websites.
- Consideration is being given to better communication with the growing Polish community in the High Peak.

- Signed websites should be introduced.

Actions:

- **HPBC publications subject to plain English 'proofing'.**
- **HPBC are producing a 'Welcome to High Peak' information pack targeted at new migrant residents**

9.Transport

Issues raised:

- There are serious equalities issues regarding access and use of transport in the Peak District. Especially vulnerable are young people in rural areas, the elderly and disabled.
- Public transport services are often inadequate in rural areas eg. there may be a bus service into town but no convenient return service.
- Should there be more/better funding for community transport and access groups?
- Some taxis provide for the special needs of disabled users. Others need training in handling and attitude.
- There should be a link between these issues and the emerging Local Development Framework.
- Rural transport is an issue for local businesses and can adversely affect recruitment. There is funded programme called Wheels to Work covering Derbyshire which can help individuals get to employment and training.

Actions:

- Comments should be passed to DCC public transport section as transport is outside the scope of District Council's responsibility

JOINT REGENERATION SERVICES EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP 7th MARCH 2008

FEEDBACK ON IDENTIFIED ISSUES

Questions/Comments Arising (Q/C) and Officers' Responses (R).

Economic Development

Q/C1 Most economic regeneration initiatives in the area are directed to the market towns. Is the rural area disadvantaged?

R1.1 There are several business development and skills development initiatives that cover all rural areas but most investment in infrastructure and workspace is directed towards the market towns. These serve the rural areas and provide the most cost effective locations for major new development.

R1.2 The 'creative industries' offer an opportunity for regeneration of rural areas within the wider rural economy

Q/C2 Are poor access to Broadband and mobile phone signals a drawback for rural businesses and residents?

R2 The whole of the wider Peak area now has Broadband coverage although speed remains an issue for some. Mobile signals are limited in the more remote areas but this has to be balanced against the environmental impact of masts in the high quality landscape.

Q/C3 More investment is needed in village halls to widen their use for possible local economic regeneration.

R3 The efforts of the Voluntary sector are essential to the survival of rural services. Also, Derbyshire Dales District Council operates a Village Hall Grants scheme, the details of which may be obtained from the Council's Head of Democratic Services at Matlock Town Hall.

Q/C4 Both the government's criteria used to measure Multiple Deprivation and emda's emphasis on new projects achieving high numerical economic outputs to qualify for grants sometimes overlooks the needs of rural areas.

R4 It is considered that the Regional Development Agency should be encouraged to also place emphasis on the impact and outcome of projects in rural areas employing indicators more suited to the rural agenda.

Access to Grants

Q/C5 Availability of grants should be more accessible to all. Timescales are often too tight, small community groups can find it difficult to complete application forms on time.

R5 Advice to groups on applications is essential – Derbyshire Rural Community Council/CVS/Local Authorities offer assistance.

Q/C6 There is a need for more detailed monitoring of how grants are used.

R6 Monitoring needs to be consistent and proportional to the level of grant and should include equalities issues.

Access to Visitor Accommodation

Q/C7 The scope of the National Accessible Scheme is limited and does not include all disabilities.

R7 More research is needed to identify the gaps.

Q/C8 There is confusion over whether the “Gay Friendly” logo is universally applied; some accommodation providers use it, some do not.

R8 Specialist advice on this issue should be sought from Derbyshire Friend.

Q/C9 Is excluding uninspected accommodation from the Peak District and Derbyshire Guide restricting access to low cost holidays?

R9 This is an issue that the DMP may wish to discuss.

Q/C10 Improved access to better public toilets is needed, as are facilities within visitor accommodation.

R10 Derbyshire Dales District Council is soon to embark on a review of its public toilets and may wish to include the DMP in the list of consultees.

Promotion of Peak District to BME groups

Q/C11 There is a perception that BME groups are under-represented in the profile of visitors to the Peak District

R11. 1 This is an issue that the DMP may wish to discuss.

R11.2 More research and evidence would be of use.

R11.3 Could a special cultural event be held in the Peak District to promote the area to BME groups? Advice could be sought from PDNPA which has set up the Mosaic project and carried out other work with inner city schools and the Somali community

Arts Development

Q/C12 Are the Councils' arts services reaching all groups within the community?

**Could resources be more targeted at disadvantaged groups?
After school clubs/activities should be made available to all children.**

R12 The LAA Cultural Block may wish to consider these issues including the need for robust data to establish better information on any inequalities in arts provision.

Pricing Policies

Q/C13 Access to arts activities needs to be affordable to all to be accessible to all. A consistent approach across the county to pricing discounts should be considered.

R13.1 Other ways of funding could be investigated e.g. donations.

R13.2 In setting a pricing policy for a particular activity or event, issues such as accessibility, quality and audience need to be carefully considered.

Q/C14 Buxton Opera House pricing structure does not encourage OAP and unwaged groups.

R14 High Peak Borough Council will raise this issue and issues of accessibility with Buxton Opera House as part of the review of partnership arrangements.

Festivals Plan

Q/C15 Equalities issues should be considered in the organising of festivals.

R15.1 Festivals should be able to provide an Access Policy on demand.

R15.2 Emergency Planning should ideally be involved in the organising of festivals.

R15.3 Arts Derbyshire Festival Toolkit includes advice on access and equalities

Equal Access to Information

Q/C16 Is there a need for promotional material for tourism and other regeneration services to be printed in foreign languages?

R16.1 At present both local authorities produce English only publications but offer translation services on request. This was considered by the meeting as adequate. Government policy also supports this approach.

R16.2 Consideration is being given to better communication with the growing Polish community in the High Peak by the Borough Council.

Q/C 17 Language used in all council publications should be accessible.

R17 This view is supported.

Transport

Q/C18 There are serious equalities issues regarding access and use of transport in the Peak District. Especially vulnerable are young people in rural areas, the elderly and disabled. Public transport services are often inadequate in rural areas eg. there may be a bus service into town but no convenient return service.

R18.1 This is an issue already being considered by the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales Accessibility Partnership.

R18.2 Rural transport is also an issue for local businesses and can adversely affect recruitment. There is a funded programme called Wheels to Work covering Derbyshire which can help individuals get to employment and training.

QC19 Some taxi companies provide for the special needs of disabled users. Others need training in handling and attitude.

R19 Derbyshire Dales District Council is to review its policy on the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles with access for all being one of the key aims.

