



1. Main role of economic Development – essentially catalyst / facilitator
2. Issues:
 - a. collaboration
 - b. communication
 - c. trust
 - d. confidence
 - e. attitude
 - f. building on what we have got
 - g. cost of entry for new businesses (depending upon technology)
 - h. maximising the amount spent with locally owned and managed businesses. (for every £60,000 spent by people businesses and the public sector locally, one additional local job is created. (The amount spent with businesses operating in the Forest which are not locally owned and managed to create an additional job is significantly more - say £150,000)
3. Areas where FODDC can influence outcomes:
 - a. ensuring councillors - district and county - as well as employees fully understand issues
 - b. more integrated use of media and networks, and use of all possible channels e.g. FSB who have Forest representatives meeting ministers and EU.
 - c. encouraging groups to work together – e.g. business organizations, schools, colleges, public sector, etc.
 - d. recognition of the inter-related nature of the Forest's offering – e.g. tourism, food, crafts, hospitality, training, etc.
 - e. bringing in external funding, including helping others to bid for EU, Regional etc. funding
 - f. lobbying to get banks and insurance companies to look favourably on Forest organizations
4. Evaluation of infrastructure – in promoting Forest:
 - a. tourism and relocation focus
 - i. scenic & treescape – visual amenity
 - ii. adventure
 - iii. family friendly
 - iv. scientific interest
 - v. history – industrial, etc.
 - vi. unique
 - vii. accessibility
 - b. business focus
 - i. broadband provision
 - ii. skills base
 - iii. sectors
 - iv. clusters –training, ideas, supply-chains, mutual support, etc.
5. Main requirements:
 - a. need for critical mass
 - b. understanding and respect between public sector education and business – building long-term, sustainable relationships & communities
 - c. need to develop greater understanding of the structure and make up of Forest businesses by all
 - d. each constituency to be properly represented by accredited person

POTENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

Manufacturing and engineering

- The Forest has a tradition of creativity and design as well as production.
- Skills are valued above knowledge.
- The recognition and nurturing of innate skills can be utilised to make education more attractive and relevant to youngsters and their parents.
- Raise attainment levels through multiple pathways to learning
- Create a desire for learning that leads to improved grades and a significant improvement in the local economy as well as moving Forest education as a whole to above parity with the rest of Gloucestershire

Agriculture and food

- FOD has the largest land-based college in the UK
- build relationships across the District between education and relevant businesses (e2b and b2b) to strengthen and grow the sector
- build relationships between this and tourism and hospitality, food, etc
- encouraging food-based businesses to buy locally
- specify that public sector food procurement specifies fresh and unpackaged food (this also to be part of specification for sub-contractors)
- raise profile for local producer to consumer channels – e.g. farmers market, local websites, craft markets, etc.
- possible EU funding

Media & IT

- Media is the UK's fastest growing sector 15% of GDP - both Gloucester and Newport Universities have significant media schools.
- Games, for example (for entertainment, marketing and learning), and other learning materials are perceived as major areas for growth in multi-media digital technologies.
- Development of co-ops and local consortia to bid for local IT contracts in public and private sectors.
- Drawing up and design of public service contracts to facilitate local provision by contractors and supply chains.

Education and Training

- Building long-term, sustainable relationships between education, industry and communities
- Information about availability of specialist training potential – e.g. by technical and manufacturing companies to both education and other appropriate businesses
- Provision of services to schools and universities
- Training for industry and commerce and the public sector
- Outward bound activities and adventure training

Tourism

- Provision of user-friendly information for internal and external tourists
- Use of local media in promoting tourism – e.g. signboards promoted Forest Radio and tourism



- website
- Use of tourism to promote Forest businesses and products
- Awareness in Forest business to promote tourism
- Outward bound activities as a schools and university market
- Activity and adventure holidays
- Need to offer itinerary covering long weekend, week or fortnight for tourists – to give them a reason to come and incentive to spend in FOD.
- Consistent message across all media - use of TICs, libraries, local radio, websites, signage, etc. (signage to direct tourists to other media)
- Good signposting
- Use of tourism as a shop window for all locally sourced products – food, craft, services and manufacture
- Use of tourism as an advertisement for Forest products, services, investment, location for TV programmes, film, photo-shoots, product launches. (e.g. Sony went to S Africa to launch their new digital panoramic camera – they might have been better advised to go to the top of Blaise Bailey).

Care

- Ageing population a potential growth area.
- Need for appropriate skills – nursing, + personal services such as hairdressing, etc (to maintain morale and well-being)
- Impact on spatial strategy to make housing user-friendly and supportive for older people (increases health and reduced public expenditure)

Agenda 21 Issues

- environmental/green issues, sustainability and economic security
- manufacture, utilisation and processes related to waste management, waste conversion and utilisation
- power generation, micro-generation, CHP systems, support for sustainable generation (business & domestic – German model)
- general product and service aimed at the sustainability agenda
- improving facilities by obtaining grants wherever available (all sectors)

The micro business sector

- seen by government – national/regional, etc. and banks as a major area for growth
- likely to increase where people outplaced
- unbanked (Barclays told Select Committee of House of Commons that the microbusiness sector was the least reliant on bank finance – 56 percent of businesses were said not to rely on borrowings), hence more likely to survive credit crunch. Larger businesses (50+ employees) heavily reliant on bank borrowing, so more vulnerable.
- low overheads
- low environmental impact
- many work from home – reducing travelling and carbon footprint
- strong local roots
- largely capable of solving own problems given appropriate information and opportunities to build supportive relationships (less demand on public purse)
- Forest microbusinesses being wooed by some urban authorities

Barriers to business growth

- cost of employment
- lack of understanding by education and training facilitators
- lack of understanding by public sector
- failure of government-funded business support to offer joined-up provision, especially for micro businesses
- cost and quality of available premises
- compliance issues (and costs)
- broadband IT and digital media provision
- lack of understanding of what is available
- education and skills (recruitment)
- training - upskilling

Key Action Points

1. CVs for members of all consultative groups and committees in FOD – to clarify:
 - a. age
 - b. experience/qualifications relevant to committee/group, etc.
 - c. details of other committees individual serves on
 - d. who the individual represents (and their constituency/accreditation)
 - e. register of interestsabove to be publicly available on FODDC websites, etc.
2. Forest Portal Website :
 - a. publish url on roadside, etc. signposts on all major routes and places where people congregate.
 - b. post on to website specific examples of local sourcing, and tenders for which local businesses can bid. (FODDC to design specifications to facilitate local sources of supply – Gloucestershire County Council claim they do this already).
3. Advertise FOD (with frequency) radio on signposts.
 - a. FOD radio to provide info at specific time about events, etc, in FOD
 - b. FOD radio to use drama students from local schools/colleges to do voice overs to advertise local businesses - useful to businesses and to student c.v's etc.
4. Scrap the "a place to be proud of" strapline – and replace with something more specifically relevant to FOD, e.g. (for starters)
 - Birthplace of the Steel Industry (Mushet)
 - Hobbit Country (Tolkein)
 - The Secret Forest
 - Your Forest Adventure starts here
 - A Royal Playground since Magna Carta
5. Provision of reliable, quality, coherent, accessible, relevant information to businesses and public in FOD – where they know where to find it. (Need to differentiate between political messages and proper factual information and guidance for local businesses). Research shows this is the most effective way local authorities can sustain and build the business sector in the area.