

ECONOMY - ASSETS, ISSUES & VISION

SNAPSHOT

- 1100 jobs in UEV, 2200 economically active
- Unemployment = 1.1%
- 4 new businesses
- Rent prime retail unit = £5500 pa
- KSGS GCSE = 53% A*-C grades
- KSGS ranked 23/46 Cumbria
- 34 comparison goods shops
- 24 convenience goods shops
- 2 employers with 50+ employees
- No job centre
- No new industrial units

TOWN & VILLAGES SURVEYS

- + 35.1% value variety of shops
- + 8.8% value level of service
- + Attractive to tourists/unspoilt
- + Good schools
- 12.6% concerned about balance of shops – tourists/locals
- Early closing
- Poor employment opportunities
- Narrow economic base
- No wet weather attraction
- Quality & variety of open market
- Lack of eating establishments – variety & quality
- Inadequate marketing of town
- No business association

WORKSHOP

- + Valued for events, area attractive to tourists – countryside & walking potential
- Need to promote to attract new businesses
- Need to widen economic base of area
- Need to widen employment opportunities, especially for young people – loss of young people
- Aid diversification by support for re-use of land & farm buildings
- Develop ICT infrastructure & business support
- Improve training opportunities to build skills base
- Promote tourism – new attractions (visitor centre, swim pool/sports hall, railway line, events)
- Promote shop local
- Co-ordinate local events calendar

VISION

A vibrant economy and dynamic business community which has the capacity to attract new business. High levels of employment transformed in part by higher added value employment. A local workforce that has access to a broad range of training opportunities and is committed to take advantage of those opportunities for personal and career fulfilment. A strategically marketed Upper Eden Valley image which capitalises on the distinctive natural assets of the area and helps promote sustainable tourism.

Strategic objectives:

- Work in partnership with the District Council to identify and develop a small range of commercial and industrial property sites capable of attracting new business, relocations and business expansions.
- Promote the area as an attractive base for business, in collaboration with external agencies.
- Increase understanding of the advantages of broadband technology and generate a business case for broadband supply, using available expertise.
- Work in partnership with L&SC, learning providers and training agencies to establish a rural perspective on funding in relation to training opportunities for rural residents.
- Promote locally based training initiatives in co-operation with training providers.
- Generate awareness and commitment to improving skill levels locally in partnership with L&SC and training providers.
- Market the area as an attractive tourism destination focussing on the area's natural assets developing website, tourism publications, attractions, facilities and events.

EC1 EMPLOYMENT WORKSHEET

- 1.1% unemployment; fallen year on year; few long-term unemployed
- 2 companies employing 50 or more; predominantly micro businesses – more than in Cumbria or nationally.
- 52% of KS Ward population not economically active
- Only 35% (803) of KS Ward in full-time employment; 27% (297) part-time – marked increase in part-time working & women in employment
- Employment largely in low added value sectors characterised by low skills, low pay and little incentive to engage in training.
- 74% of households in KS Ward have an income lower than UK average whilst cost of housing is higher than rest of Cumbria – polarised between affluent minority & significant minority who struggle on low incomes/high housing costs
- High proportion (30%) of single residences
- Weak local economy with possible consequent impact on health and other quality of life experiences – travel, learning, arts
- Business confidence cannot be easily determined, 1 larger employer contracting; another has opportunity to expand
- 50% of local economically active residents (KS, Brough, R'dale Wards) commute elsewhere to work
- Growing conviction that KS needs to strengthen economy through marketing and encouragement to new businesses and high value added employment

EC2 RETAIL WORKSHEET

- Shoppers from villages v important in boosting local economy
- Local bus services v important in facilitating shopping
- Increased attractiveness of town through shop refurbishments
- Balance between local shopping needs and visitor shopping a delicate one
- Any loss of livestock market could affect trade
- Outdoor market vulnerable
- Mixed retailer confidence
- Demand for shops is variable; 5 new retailers, 3 remaining unsold for some time
- Not all messages of report "The Future of Kirkby Stephen" have been heeded

EC3 TRAINING/EDUCATION WORKSHEET

- Very little vocational training demanded or on offer locally
- High proportion of adult education courses devoted to IT
- Tutor availability affecting range of adult education courses
- General level of education & qualifications is noticeably lower in Eden than either Cumbria or UK
- KSGS academic achievements at 16 are better than either County or UK
- KSGS academic achievements at 18 are lower than Cumbrian & UK averages
- 30% of KSGS 16 yr olds travel to other schools or FE colleges for further education
- Only 4 public Internet access points
- Number of pre-school places in area appear to meet needs
- There is a waiting list for baby places

EC4 COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY NEEDS WORKSHEET

- Somewhat static picture in respect of lettings and new build in KS & villages
- Apparent equilibrium between demand & availability although recent enquiries suggest at least three firms are looking to expand or relocate into KS
- New businesses/expansions would have difficulty finding premises
- Lack of increase in rents suggests this aspect of local economy is fairly static
- Vacancy levels for commercial properties have remained fairly static

EC5 TOURISM/VISITOR SERVICES WORKSHEET

- Attractions mainly outdoor, walking, natural assets (SSSIs, SAMs, Nat Nature Reserves), heritage.
- Area vulnerable to seasonal variations – fewer visitors, reduced income, fewer jobs.
- Economy vulnerable – dependent on tourism – seasonal, low pay, part-time.
- Visitor stays less than 2 nights overall.
- Good range of accommodation but need a few more beds at luxury & budget end.
- Little targeted marketing.
- Some accommodation websites.
- TIC reduced winter opening hours.
- No information facilities at station.

EC6 BUSINESS SUPPORT WORKSHEET

- Continuation of Town Forum in doubt
- No business support agencies in KS although banks offer comprehensive range of services and advice to local businesses
- HERS scheme has helped to improve overall town centre and financial assistance in the wake of FMD has provided short-term help to some individual businesses, as has that provided by CCF
- No business/industry events (eg tradefairs)
- Possibly 61% of private homes with Internet access.
- Little obvious demand for broadband, therefore weak business case. Likelihood that area will be left behind and lose business opportunities as a result.
- No precise timetable for rollout of broadband.
- Plans for 2mbps cable with wireless connection in 2/3 years. No plans for broadband above 2mbps.
- Opportunities for e-business under-exploited.
- Absolute number of business websites not known.
- Numbers using Internet for purchase & sales not known and collaboration with partner firms is not known.