

Bridgend Regeneration Strategy

First Partner Engagement Workshop
Summary Report

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Approved by: Simon Pringle Date: 06/07/07
Chief Operating Officer

1: Introduction

- 1.1 Bridgend County Borough Council, in conjunction with the Welsh Assembly Government's Department of Enterprise, Innovation & Networks (DEIN), commissioned SQW Consulting to carry out a major study of regeneration in Bridgend county borough, sitting within the context of the Community Strategy. The study is made up of three stages:
- Generation of baseline data, supported by stakeholder interviews, to develop a SWOT Report
 - Development of a Strategic Framework for the regeneration strategy
 - A prioritised Action Plan to implement the strategy
- 1.2 As part of the process a first engagement workshop was held with partners on Wednesday 20 June 2007, to respond to the SWOT Report.
- 1.3 The workshop was run by SQW Consulting and Council staff, with an outline programme including:
- a scene-setting presentation from SQW on the existing market and policy drivers, and the headline messages from the data that SQW have researched and interpreted. This was drawn together to give SQW's first-cut assessment of the key socio-economic challenges facing the Borough and what these might mean for the regeneration strategy. SQW's slides are also being distributed to all attendees.
 - facilitated break-out groups to assess reaction to the challenges, and to prioritise the challenges in relation to regeneration. Details of participants in each group are presented in Annex A.
 - a plenary session to pull together the outcomes and issues for discussion, and give an update on the next stages of the regeneration study.
- 1.4 The break-out groups considered the following questions:
- To what extent do you recognise the socio-economic challenges for Bridgend highlighted by the *data* - *and what other perspectives* would be helpful
 - From your perspective, what is the *single most significant socio-economic challenge* - and why?
 - As a group, what *would three specific priorities for the Regeneration Strategy* be?
- 1.5 Each group then reported back to the plenary, and also produced, through their nominated rapporteur, a summary.
- 1.6 A list of suggestions for one action that participants put forward, for the regeneration strategy to come forward with, is appended in Annex B.

2: Break-out Group Reports and Summaries

Reports from the break-out groups

- 2.1 This section brings together reports from each of the break-out groups, which were prepared by rapporteurs from each group to answer the questions outlined in paragraph 1.4 above. These reports are then summarised in two tables: the queries regarding data in the SWOT document, and the challenges and priorities, grouped against the SWOT headings.

Blue Group

- 2.2 Chair: Richard Shaddick, DEIN, WAG

Facilitator: Michael Palin, SQW Consulting

Rapporteur: Brian Roderick, Cooper Standard Automotive

Question (1): To what extent do you recognise the socio-economic challenges for Bridgend highlighted by the data - and what other perspectives would be helpful?

- Broad recognition of the same socio-economic challenges highlighted by SQW although they would like to see more focus on the opportunities based around the vast natural resources of the valleys and coastal area.
- Tourism may be low value added but all areas will need entry level employment opportunities particularly in the valleys with manufacturing decline/convergence around the centre of Bridgend.
- Because of the socio-economic focus, there was no recognition of environmental issues. The group felt that regeneration efforts should be on the tri-axis base of social, economic and environmental regeneration; more recognition of environmental issues please.

Question (2): What is the single most significant socio-economic challenge - and why?

- Ensuring the approach to regeneration is co-ordinated and there is no duplication with other agencies. Resources will be more effectively/efficiently used if efforts are in partnership with all sectors and agencies.

Question (3): What would three specific priorities for the Regeneration Strategy be?

- Ensuring the skills and knowledge base is linked into the economic trends and data predictions of the research material so that we can maximise the employment opportunities in the most value adding areas.
- Overcome the negative reputation by putting the positives first. Promote the good things outside of the economics e.g. low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour,

good community spirit. It's a good place to live, to attract high income families to and to retain our best people.

- Focus economic regeneration on the areas outside the centre of Bridgend as the centre will, in the main, take care of itself. This should not to the total exclusion of the centre e.g. physical regeneration schemes are still important. Regeneration should be county-wide.

Red Group

2.3 Chair: Tejay de Kretser, BAVO

Facilitator: Louise Fradd, Bridgend CBC

Rapporteur: Graham Humphrys, Church in Wales

Question (1): To what extent do you recognise the socio-economic challenges for Bridgend highlighted by the data - and what other perspectives would be helpful?

- The data provided for the 18 - 24 year olds needs more interpretation/ explanation.
- The use of the legacy from past heavy industries as an explanation of the higher ill health percentages, is overstated. The last of the local coal mines closed nearly a quarter of a century ago and by then the number of local people employed in the Port Talbot steelworks was very small. There must now be other reasons why the ill health percentages remain persistently high.
- One of the group with knowledge of the situation, reported that there was a serious problem of poor health among women in the 18-24 age group and this was not identified in the data analysis. Obesity among this group is all too frequent, the general health is poor and these problems are exacerbated in too many cases by pregnancy at a young age.
- There needs to be greater recognition of the proportion of the local economy accounted for by economic activity (services in particular but also some manufacturing) generated to meet the demands of local consumption spending.
- The reasons for the use of comparative data for other places such as Cardiff and the United Kingdom, needs to be stated. If it is to underline the targets needing to be met by Bridgend County Borough Council area, qualifying comments need to be put in about whether the higher levels shown in this other data, are likely to be met in Bridgend County Borough area (for example Cardiff as a capital city will always have higher levels of high end Services, with all the economic and occupational implications of this). Without qualifying comments the comparisons are less useful. Comparative figures for other European areas might also be included if the aim is to demonstrate target levels for the Bridgend County Borough Council area.
- In the analysis presented, there is insufficient attention paid to the significance of the cross-cutting theme of the Environment for the economic and social aspects of

regeneration. (The proposal for a 'Valleys Park' covering some northern parts of the Borough was mentioned as an example).

- There was general agreement that the statistical material was well-presented and well-chosen to make the points. Most people know some individual elements of the statistics, but not others, so that it was useful to see them as a package.

Question (2): What is the single most significant socio-economic challenge - and why?

- There were strong feelings based on local knowledge and experience that social and economic aspirations among the general population are much too low and changing these should be a priority. There is a lack of personal confidence about individual ability and potential, and about what it is possible to achieve. This is particularly strong in young men, who demonstrate very negative attitudes towards achievement, and parents seem to reinforce this. It would be useful to have more data to provide a basis for determining action to counter this, though it is acknowledged that this is a difficult 'soft' data area.
- In dealing with the challenge of greater aspirations and motivation, there is a need for a better bridging of the school to work gap and a need to educate mature people, including grandparents, who can have a vital part to play through the informal education of younger family members. The more mature people need to learn how to learn, and incentives provided (such as a job or an informal sector position) to
- There is increasing urgency to ensure that the local economy and society becomes adapted to the environmental challenges (especially global climatic change) now widely recognised. Related to this is the need to recognise the significance of local environments (natural and urban) in moulding the aspirations and attitudes of young people in particular, which impact upon economic achievement.

Question (3): What would three specific priorities for the Regeneration Strategy be?

- Ensure that the environment (natural and man-made) and quality of life in Bridgend County Borough Council area are at a level to ensure that higher skilled and educated people will want to live here, and that there will be sufficient economic opportunities to enable them to do this.
- Dealing with the issues around the high levels of economic inactivity of the 18-24 age-group must be a high priority.
- The low skill/education level of the population and especially the low proportion of people with Level Four education attainment is a serious problem. (Differential outward migration must be an important factor in this given the number of locally educated people who become university graduates).

Green Group

2.4 Chair: John Evans, Business in Focus

Facilitator: Mark Halliwell, Bridgend CBC

Rapporteur: Ray Pearce, Bridgend CBC

Question (1): To what extent do you recognise the socio-economic challenges for Bridgend highlighted by the data – and what other perspectives would be helpful?

- The Group fully recognised the socio-economic challenges as set out.
- The analysis needs to bring out more clearly the tension between developing a high value, knowledge economy on the one side and tackling issues around low skills and inactivity on the other.
- It would be helpful to have more information on the skills progression of people at NVQ 2/3 level to Level 4.
- A breakdown of some of the data within Bridgend would be helpful. There are large variations within Bridgend and local variations in demography e.g. number of in-migrants to areas and their profile.
- More information on the degree to which wealth is being lost to the area by going to corporate HQs elsewhere rather than to locally based businesses. (Branch economy syndrome).
- Should we also look at a Happiness Index – GVA too narrow!
- Further analysis on the links between the health sector and others, including education.
- Data on mobility and car ownership. Analysis of issues around travel to work?
- The analysis of deprivation should also take in the fact that pockets can be found in many areas, including wards regarded as wealthy.

Question (2): What is the single most significant socio-economic challenge – and why?

- The challenge around the impact of macro-economic forces including globalisation including: loss of low value manufacturing jobs, growth of service sector and niche markets. This challenge was seen to include the building and support for a strong local and adaptable SME base and the provision of the infrastructure for other developments to take place – e.g. I.T., transport, environmental quality.
- Skills at all levels – including promoting a life-long learning culture. Also need a better join-up of those involved with education, skills and training. While

recognising we need to address issues across the board there is a particular issue with young, male adults.

- We must address clusters of deprivation and the cycle of decline and the issues around this such as low skills and we must listen, engage and respond to community needs:

Question (3): What would three specific priorities for the Regeneration Strategy be?

- To prioritise in order to maximise opportunities in the short to medium term.
- Delivering existing programmes.
- Addressing the three big issues identified in Question 2 above.
- Developing structures to join up partners for delivery.
- Linked to the point above, to also look outwards e.g. around the impact of St.Athan development.
- Strengthening the private sector's role in partnerships.
- Developing and making best use of human capital, i.e. the people issues and support for people.

Orange Group

2.5 Chair: Mark Jones, Bridgend College

Facilitator: Malcolm Williams, SQW Consulting

Rapporteur: Mark Shephard, Bridgend CBC

Question (1): To what extent do you recognise the socio-economic challenges for Bridgend highlighted by the data – and what other perspectives would be helpful?

- Broad messages are correct
- Concern with the link with Neath Port Talbot in the GVA data.
- Would like to verify some data (update) e.g. qualifications. Also, clarify definitions in some cases.
- Inward and outward migration (of skills etc) would be useful
- More detail on qualifications data
- Further work/comparisons on household income (surprise at 'high' relative levels in Bridgend). Is it based on Census?
- Context e.g. Wales Spatial Plan – we thought the benchmarks were useful if we are to be aspirational.

Question (2): What are the single most significant socio-economic challenge – and why?

- Socio/economic deprivation.
- Ageing population and related health issues.
- Skills agenda – up-skilling the workforce.

Question (3): What would three specific priorities for the Regeneration Strategy be?

- Inclusiveness
 - Focus on both young people and older people – opportunities for all.
- Skills Agenda
 - Can we sensibly influence it?
 - Re-profiling of expenditure (schools/college).
 - Priorities/targeting (industry/employers).
 - Funding is an issue! (mainstream and european).
- Transport
 - Mobility/portability.
 - Ghettoised inaccessible areas – the role of the ‘valleys’?

Summarising the feedback

2.6 The four break-out group summaries above are summarised as two tables: requests for further data (Table 2-1), and challenges and priorities (Table 2-2) which will be used to inform the challenges posed by the SWOT, and the development of the Strategic Framework

Data Queries

Table 2-1 Requests for further data or analysis	
Requests and Queries	Response
<i>Environment</i> – was there enough data or attention paid to it?	The environment will be included as thematic priority to take forward into the strategic framework and regeneration strategy
<i>Skills</i> – can we breakdown by age?	NVQs by age will be provided in the final SWOT document
<i>Break data down</i> within Bridgend	Further discussion with BCBC (Ray Pearce) to elucidate any useful breakdown

Requests and Queries	Response
Is there <i>wealth retention</i> from local businesses i.e. is company wealth made and spent locally	Possible use of ABI2 data – this would need to be purchased. SQW to discuss with BCBC Does it breakdown anyway to Bridgend level? Need critical mass of businesses for confidentiality reasons
<i>Happiness Index</i> – can we understand positive feedback as well as growth targets	Welsh QoL survey – any relevant figures to be inserted in the final SWOT
<i>Transport</i> – is access to work supported?	Travel to work data - present 2001 data on 'in and out' work migration as a map, to show Bridgend in its sub-region Car ownership statistics will be clarified
<i>GVA Data</i> includes Port Talbot Neath – can it be separated	GVA 2004 figures will allow separate Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot figures
<i>Benchmarking</i> – how can we do this?	Will be addressed as part of monitoring and evaluation .framework established to support the Action Plan
<i>Health</i> – is there sufficient account of public health issues in the SWOT?	To be discussed with the Director of Public Health
<i>Earnings</i> (are they really that high?)	Data presented were household earnings – we will present weekly earnings per resident and per worker.

Source:SWOT workshop

Challenges and priorities

Table 2-2 Summary of Challenges and Priorities in relation to data areas in the SWOT

SWOT areas	Challenges	Regeneration Priorities
Economy: Overview	Respond to global/macro-economic changes (including building a solid SME base)	
Productivity		
Labour Market		Tackle economic activity in 16-24 year age group
Education & Skills	Identify and build skills for the future (Young and Old)	Skills: the young, lifelong learning Skills and Knowledge development linked to economic trends
Investment & Innovation		

SWOT areas	Challenges	Regeneration Priorities
Enterprise & Business		
Deprivation	Raise Aspiration not only in school leavers but in parents Tackle socio-economic cycle of deprivation and decline in a co-ordinated way	Tackling Inequalities: Inclusion – opportunities for all
Access to Housing and Services	Plan for the growing population of Older People – health issues Spread regeneration across the County, not a string of pearls	Transport – mobility/the valleys
Quality of Life and Environment	Environment: make Bridgend a positive place to live, work and play Improve co-ordination and partnership A more efficient use of public sector funding A clear vision and positive promotional strategy	Develop an Environmental Offer: Residential/Tourist and Green Retain local people who graduate A stronger partnership and delivery structure including the private sector A clear vision and positive promotional strategy

Source: SWOT Workshop

3: Implications for the SWOT Analysis

Drawing the messages together

Initial messages from the SWOT

3.1 In our presentation at the engagement workshop, we drew some initial messages out of the SWOT analysis. These were to

- **Better understand & anticipate global trends in Markets & Technologies**
 - Disruptive processes
 - Compete on knowledge
 - Alliances & networks
 - Competitor awareness
- **Close our Productivity Gap**
 - Higher Value added focus
 - Grow economic activity by bearing down on inactivity
 - Increased level of Skills – basic & higher
 - Build innovation & investment levels
- **Focus on expanding (& some adjusting) sectors**
 - Expanding – e.g. Computing, Communications, Professional Services
 - Adjusting – e.g. Financial services, Construction
- **Understand in economic terms how we perform as a distinctive national city**
- **Ensure economic benefits are widely shared**
 - Equity & Social distribution . . .
 - Vital for drawing people back into the mutually rewarding activity

Messages from the Workshop

3.2 The Workshop responded to the SWOT by drawing together specific challenges and priorities, in particular suggesting the need for the Regeneration Strategy to focus on

- **Skills and Knowledge Development** (especially the young), linked to economic trends and striving to retain graduates

- **Equity and Social Inclusion**
- **Transport issues affecting mobility and access to and across the Borough**
- **Creating a clear environmental offer for residents, tourist and the challenges of climate change**
- **A clear vision and positive promotional strategy for Bridgend**

3.3 These priorities need to be delivered through stronger partnerships in action as well as strategy, including the private sector.

So how will we take this forward?

- 3.4 The data queries will be taken forward as outlined in Table 2-1, and adjustments and additions made where possible to the SWOT. Information generated will in any case be fed into our larger data baseline statistics, from which the SWOT analysis was generated.
- 3.5 The challenges and priorities will be fed through into our production of the Strategic Framework and the Action Plan that follows. Both of these documents will be the subject of future workshops, where we can develop and fine tune our thinking and planning.
- 3.6 The date of the next workshop is 14 September 2007.

Annex A: Workshop Attendees by Break-Out Group

RED GROUP

Tejay de Kretser (Chair)	BAVO
Louise Fradd (Facilitator)	Bridgend CBC
Graham Humphrys (Rapporteur)	Church In Wales
Tony Morgan	Ynysawdre Comprehensive
Ian Matthey	Job Centre Plus
Sharon Mott	University of Glamorgan
Ellie Fry	Bridgend CBC
Steve Moon	Bridgend CBC

BLUE GROUP

Richard Shaddick (Chair)	DEIN, WAG
Michael Palin (Facilitator)	SQW Ltd
Brian Roderick (Rapporteur)	Cooper Standard Automotive
Dawn Davies	Creation Development Ltd
Mark Sabine	Environment Agency
Andy Morgan	South Wales Police
Les Jones	Bridgend CBC
Stuart Burge-Jones	Bridgend CBC
Denise Fletcher	Bridgend CBC
Martin Hooker	Bridgend CBC

GREEN GROUP – ROOM 3

Jon Evans (Chair)	Business In Focus
Mark Halliwell (Facilitator)	Bridgend CBC
Ray Pearce (Rapporteur)	Bridgend CBC
Mark Evans	Groundwork Bridgend & NPT
John Elfrod	SHOUT
Nigel Slater	Valleys 2 Coast
Peter Cole	Capital Region Tourism

Jon Evans (Chair)	Business In Focus
Edward Coyle	Local Health Board
John Bevan	JB Consultancy/Sony UK
Clayton Jones	University of Glamorgan
Mal Gay	Bridgend CBC
Colin Eades	Bridgend CBC
Ieuan Sherwood	Bridgend CBC

ORANGE GROUP – ROOM 4

Mark Jones (Chair)	Bridgend College
Malcolm Williams (Facilitator)	SQW Ltd
Mark Shephard (Rapporteur)	Bridgend CBC
Craig Lambourne	Bridgend Youth Council
Mike Kendall	DELLS, WAG
Huw Roberts	Invest Wales, WAG
Christine Court	Never Too Old Action Team
Rhodri Jones	Bridgend CBC
Linda Smith	Bridgend CBC
Sue Whittaker	Bridgend CBC
Peter Green	Bridgend CBC

Annex B: One action that you would like the strategy to come forward with

- Regeneration of the valleys
- Re-engagement programmes for excluded young
- Learning and skills for disadvantaged communities strategy
- Partnership beyond the boundaries
- Re-engagement of people with few or no qualifications
- More accessible Bridgend – easy, cheap transport – reliable, frequent
- Equality impact assessment as part of strategy
- Respect the natural environment
- The verb is more important than the noun
- Active involvement with more young people
- A co-ordinated change programme over a reasonable period
- ACTION
- A few clear priorities
- A sense of place (to be proud of)
- Co-ordinated strategic framework for growth
- Support for voluntary agencies
- Equitable life options for older people
- Develop structures and services that cater for the needs of all – young, old, disadvantaged, able, disabled, et al
- Encourage/succeed in bringing even more businesses to the area
- Focus on and prioritise one big thing at a time