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***UNDERSTANDING THE RESILIENCE OF THE ASHFIELD AND MANSFIELD
ECONOMY***

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Presented to

Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils

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1 INTRODUCTION

'Resilience is an emergent property of a system – it's not a result of any one of the system's parts but of the synergy between all its parts. So, as a rough and ready rule, boosting the ability of each part to take care of itself in a crisis boosts overall resilience.'¹

In July 2009, the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) released a piece of research entitled *'Toward a new wave of local economic activism: The future for economic strategies.'*² This piece of research introduced the CLES resilience model, a conceptual framework designed to show the structure of a local economy and the relationships that exist and influence it. CLES believe resilience is an important aspect of any local economy as it allows a locality to be change ready and adaptable, riding global economic punches, recovering quickly, working within environmental benefits, and having high levels of social inclusion.

To achieve a better understanding of a local economy and therefore its resilience, the research acknowledged a better understanding is needed of how different economic spheres – broadly categorised into social, public and commercial – interact with each other and are mutually dependent for achieving positive development outcomes. Based on these interdependencies, the research found that a truly holistic approach, but not necessarily the same blend of factors in each area, is needed to achieve prosperous local economies which can be translated into a better quality of life for all people living in a locality.

April 2010 sees the introduction of the new statutory Local Economic Assessments (LEA), which provides a duty on upper and unitary local authorities to carry out a detailed economic assessment of their area. CLES asserts that there is a need for local authorities to adopt the resilience model as an approach to framing assessment, as part of the new LEA duty and creating economic strategies. CLES believe it should become the core approach to economic development in all times – good and bad. It is only by fostering resilience that areas can create local economies that can regenerate themselves and adapt to change.

While the framework provides a useful model, there was a need for CLES to understand whether the resilience model could be practically applied to a local economy. CLES released a call for local authorities that would be interested in partnering CLES in the first wave of a pilot resilience research project. Following a great deal of interest, CLES selected six authorities across England that covered a range of different geographical areas:

- 1) Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils;
- 2) Cambridgeshire County Council³ and West Suffolk⁴;
- 3) Cherwell District Council;
- 4) Manchester City Council;
- 5) Northumberland County Council;
- 6) Southern Staffordshire Partnership⁵.

The pilot projects have been designed to be collaborative and are being carried out as a full partnership process, providing CLES with an opportunity to test their new methodology while allowing the participating authorities to be involved with an innovative piece of research that will provide the areas with recommendations around how they can improve the relationships that exist and therefore the resilience of the locality.

The resilience model and the pilot projects have also received international interest and CLES have formed close links with the State of Victoria in Australia. VicUrban⁶, the State Government's sustainable urban development agency, will be applying the resilience methodology to their locality to understand the resilience of Dandenong.

¹ Thomas Homer-Dixon, *The Upside of Down*, Souvenir Press Ltd, 2006

² Centre for Local Economic Strategies, *Towards a New Wave of Local Economic Activism: The Future for Economic Strategies*. 2009 <http://www.cles.org.uk/files/104252/FileName/Newwave%28webversion%29.pdf>

³ Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council

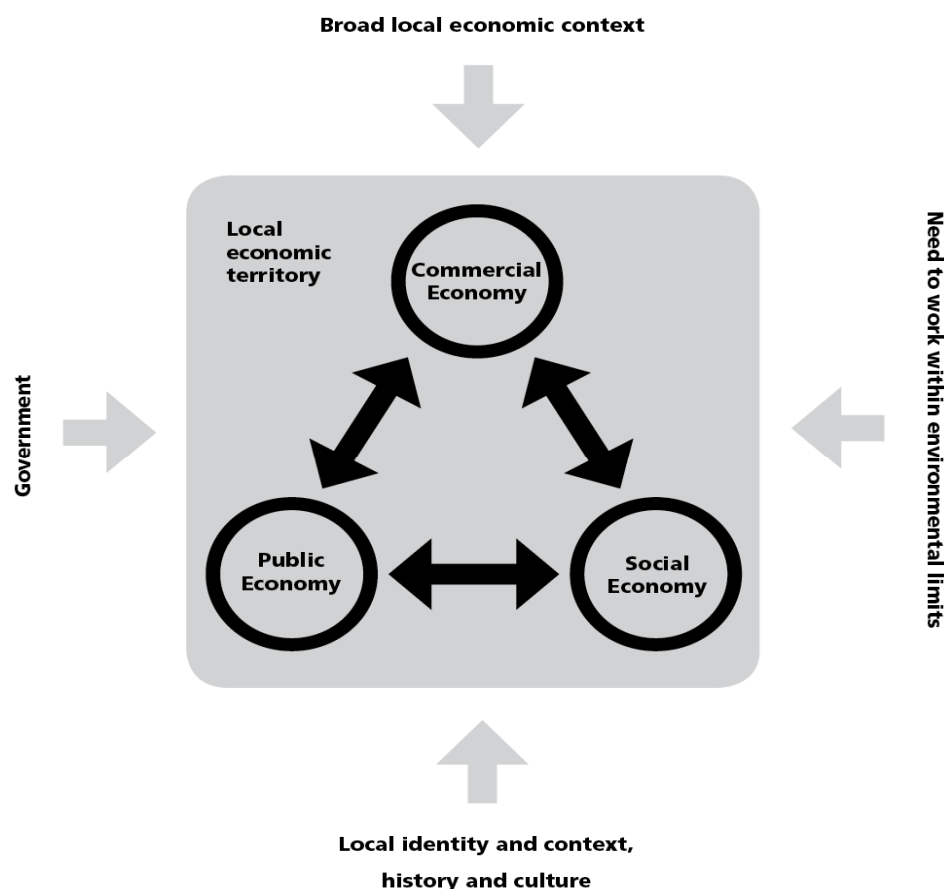
⁴ West Suffolk is made up of St Edmundsbury District Council and Forest Heath District Council

⁵ East Staffordshire District Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Lichfield District Council and Tamworth District Council

⁶ <http://www.vicurban.com/>

2 CLES' RESILIENCE MODEL

Figure 1: The CLES resilience model



The CLES resilience model provides a visual representation of how a local economic territory is structured and identifies the outside influences that have an effect on how it functions. The model has been designed to ensure all parts of the economy are represented. The commercial economy is often seen as the most important part of a local economy but the public sector can have considerable influence on a locality through procurement spend and employment opportunities, and the social sector makes a significant contribution to the local economy by employing local people, delivering local services and contributing to local supply chains.

What makes the resilience model stand out is that it acknowledges that it is the relative strength of the reciprocal relationships between the public, private and social sectors that help generate resilience within an area. Stronger mutual relationships allow a locality to be more flexible and reactionary if faced with an economic or environmental shock. However, the model remains a developing concept and as the projects continue we are continuing to mould and adapt our ideas. This is the value of doing a pilot study and it is through the process of applying the model 'on the ground' that we can further refine the model for future projects. We see all of the pilot study representatives as collaborators in this process and hope to continue to work together to develop the model further.

For the pilot research projects, the resilience model was broken down into thirteen different measures which are considered in the sections below. This is how the resilience model was turned from a conceptual framework into a structure that could be effectively mapped to a locality to assess resilience through the research.

2.1 The commercial, public and social sectors

Measure 1 – The commercial economy

The commercial economy is defined as economic wealth creation generated by businesses that are privately owned and profit motivated.

Measure 2 – The public economy

The public economy consists of services delivered on behalf of government organisations whether national, regional or local, funded by the public purse.

Measure 3 – The social economy

The social economy embraces a wide range of community, voluntary and not-for-profit activities that try to bring about positive local change.

2.2 Relationships within the local economic territory

Measure 4 – Commercial economy's relationship with the public economy

This measure looks at the attitudes of the commercial sector to the public sector. The project explores the existence and effectiveness of partnerships with the public sector and the level of interaction between the two parts of the economy (e.g. does a locality have an effective Chamber of Commerce that meets regularly with public sector partners?)

Measure 5 – Public economy's relationship with the commercial economy

Measure 5 explores the relationships that exist between the public and commercial sector. This looks at areas such as how procurement strategies have been designed to strengthen the local economy and whether the economic development policy is right to stimulate a successful private sector.

Measure 6 – Public economy's relationship with the social sector

Measure 6 looks at how the public and social sectors interact and the strengths of the relationships that exist. Procurement of services is an important area, as are examples of grants and asset transfer schemes.

Measure 7 – Social economy's relationship with the public economy

This part of the study explores how the social sector interacts with the public sector and how much influence they have in shaping the economy of the local economic territory (e.g. how do registered social landlords interact with the public sector to tackle worklessness?)

Measure 8 – Commercial economy's relationship with the social sector

Measure 8 explores how the commercial economy works together with the social sector. This involves looking at the level of Corporate Social Responsibility within a locality as well as other areas, such as funding volunteering programmes.

Measure 9 – Social economy's relationship with the commercial economy

This explores the social sector's views and attitudes towards the commercial sector (e.g. whether the social sector encourages the use of private sector individuals on their Boards?)

2.3 External factors

Measure 10 – Broad economic context and the relationship to the local economic territory

Measure 10 examines how the broad national economic picture influences the local territory. This includes looking at travel to work and leisure patterns, and the economic geography of the area. The country has just been through one of the longest and deepest recessions it has ever experienced therefore it is important to understand how a local economic territory dealt with this threat.

Measure 11 – Relationship between the local economic territory and working within environmental limits

Measure 11 explores how the sustainability agenda has been integrated into the economy of the local economic territory. The study looks at climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, how these have been integrated into strategy and policy, and the actual or potential for new green industries.

Measure 12 – Relationship between the local economic territory and local identity, history and context

To a large extent, individual histories, identities (self-identified and perceived), culture and places shape the baseline that local economies start from and the direction they take in future development.

Local conditions, in terms of society and the labour market, economic strength, specialisation, sectoral mix, and the urban and natural environment, are highly influential on determining outcomes.

Measure 13 – Relationship between the local economic territory and government

Measure 13 looks at how national policy has affected the local economic territory, understanding how the various levels of government encourage or restrict the development of a resilient economy. It can also involve looking at whether the locality has developed cases of best practice that have been translated to national level.

3 METHODOLOGY

The activity for this research was largely split into three inter-related stages, each of which employed different methodological techniques.

3.1 Stage 1: Assessing the locality's strategic vision against the thirteen measures

Stage 1 of the research sought to understand the visioning behind Ashfield and Mansfield's various strategies and policies, particularly concentrating on how the key messages within these documents related to the thirteen measures of resilience. This piece of desk based research involved analysing various key strategic documents that were supplied by both Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils. Points that were deemed significant were assigned to their relevant measure.

The points were collated into one summary document (Appendix 2) which provided CLES with a functional record of how the locality's policies matched up against the thirteen measures of resilience. It also provided the research team with a useful background to the locality before the qualitative research began.

3.2 Stage 2: Interviewing representatives from the public, private and social sector

The objective for Stage 2 was to gain a greater understanding of the strengths of the relationships that exist between the public, private and social sectors within Ashfield and Mansfield, identify any examples of best practice, and assess how the external influences (Measures 10-13) affect the local economic territory.

This stage of the research looked to examine qualitatively how the private, public and social sectors interacted and worked together. To do this, CLES undertook fourteen strategic interviews with representatives across the three sectors (full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix 3). The interviews were semi-structured in nature and were all conducted over the phone. The strategic interviews sought views from each interviewee around any structures that existed to stimulate and strengthen relationships within the economy (a copy of the strategic interview proforma is detailed in Appendix 4).

3.3 Stage 3: Collating the evidence and determining resilience

Stage 3 involved using the information accumulated through Stages 1 and 2 to determine the resilience of Ashfield and Mansfield as a locality. The first step was to use the information from the policy analysis and interviews to describe how the relationships indicated by Measures 4-13 were structured in Ashfield and Mansfield. Based on these findings, conclusions about the resilience of the Ashfield and Mansfield combined economy could be made.

Whilst the above were the main methodological activities undertaken in the research, the stages are framed within a review of the local economic conditions. Available statistical information provides the reader with an idea of Ashfield and Mansfield's local economic territory.

4 APPLYING THE RESILIENCE MODEL TO ASHFIELD AND MANSFIELD

In order to gain a contextual overview of the Ashfield and Mansfield economy, the important first step in the research process was to analyse the existing secondary quantitative data. The full data analysis can be found in Appendix 1. The purpose of this section is to identify the key themes from the available data and consider what it tells us about Ashfield and Mansfield as a locality.

4.1 Overview of Ashfield and Mansfield

The Ashfield/Mansfield conurbation has a population of over 217,000⁷. The two districts clearly have their own functional economic geography which is separate from the influence of Nottingham, the core city in the region. Both districts were formerly dominated by traditional mining and textile industries, but have experienced a restructuring of their economy and are now typically made up of small and medium sized enterprises with strong service sector representation. Both areas suffer from common problems, including:

- ❑ educational attainment levels remain well below the national average, this is particularly marked in respect of the small number of residents with high level qualifications;
- ❑ there is a lower than average representation of high growth and knowledge based industries;
- ❑ Ashfield and Mansfield is still predominantly a low skill economy with consequently low average incomes and limited opportunities for highly qualified workers.

Ashfield⁸

Ashfield is a densely populated urban district in north Nottinghamshire in the East Midlands. It has a mining and industrial history, although around a third of the district lies within the Nottingham-Derby greenbelt. The district has good road links and a tram route into Nottingham. Around 116,000 people live in Ashfield, mainly in the three towns of Sutton-in-Ashfield, Hucknall and Kirkby-in-Ashfield. The population is expected to grow more quickly than the national rate over the next decade, like the rest of the region. The majority of people are from white ethnic backgrounds – Ashfield has fewer people from other backgrounds than most of the rest of the region or the country.

Overall, Ashfield has a moderate level of deprivation, and has become relatively less deprived within recent years. However, about a third of communities in Ashfield are very deprived. The legacy of the district's industrial past shows in many ways in Ashfield. Most employment is now in manufacturing and public service industries, but worklessness is high. A lot of people are claiming out-of-work benefits, especially incapacity benefits, and in some areas there are very high levels of unemployment. Earnings and skills levels are low compared with most other places.

Average house prices are among the lowest in Britain, but it is still difficult for a lot of people to afford them because income is so low. The health of people in Ashfield is generally worse than the England average, and it is worst for those who live in the most deprived parts of the district.

Mansfield⁹

Mansfield is a small, densely populated urban district in North West Nottinghamshire in the East Midlands. The main town is Mansfield, together with the smaller towns of Mansfield Woodhouse and Warsop. Around 100,000 people live there and the population is slightly older than national averages. The population is not growing as quickly as the average, except that the proportion of people who are older is going to grow more quickly. More people are from white ethnic backgrounds than in most other areas.

Mansfield is a deprived area – among the most deprived in the country - but has become less deprived in recent years. It was formerly an area of traditional industry, but most jobs are now in the service sector, particularly public services, and in the distribution and hospitality industries.

⁷ Office for National Statistics, Midyear population estimates 2008 www.nomisweb.co.uk

⁸ Ashfield District Council organisational assessment, Oneplace, 2009

<http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/infobyarea/region/area/localorganisations/organisation/pages/default.aspx?region=49&area=390&orgId=1461>

⁹ Mansfield District Council organisational assessment, Oneplace, 2009

<http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/infobyarea/region/area/localorganisations/organisation/pages/default.aspx?region=49&area=390&orgId=1457>

Unemployment is above average and skills levels and earnings are below average. The proportion of people claiming out-of-work benefits is high, particularly incapacity benefits, as in Mansfield a lot more people than average have a long-term illness. But the district has more than 6,000 businesses and around 41,000 jobs.

Average house prices in Mansfield are low - among the lowest in Britain - but it is still a problem for local people to afford to buy homes because incomes are low. The health of people in Mansfield is generally worse than the England average, and life expectancy is lower than average.

Mansfield District Council is the only council in Nottinghamshire to have a directly elected mayor.

4.2 The public economy

Ashfield and Mansfield's combined economy has become reliant on public sector growth over the last ten years. Public sector employment makes up 28.2% of total employment in the locality and this is higher than Nottinghamshire, the East Midlands and Great Britain. The combined economy has seen public sector jobs increase by 31.9% between 1998 and 2008 and this is double the growth rate of Nottinghamshire and much higher than regional and national levels. To put this into context, private sector employment has only increased 3.5% over the same timeframe compared to an 11% increase experienced across Nottinghamshire. This high level of public sector growth may leave Ashfield and Mansfield susceptible to the impending public sector funding cuts.

4.2.1 Public procurement

When assessing the size of the Ashfield and Mansfield public economy, procurement is an important factor in understanding public sector activity, in addition to the employment growth witnessed. The process of procurement 'acquiring goods, works and services from third parties and in-house providers' can be used to derive economic, social and environmental benefit for a locality, a term now commonly known as 'community benefits'. Procurement can be used to:

- support small businesses and third sector organisations contracting opportunities;
- develop employment and skills clauses in large scale contracts;
- specify the use of environmentally friendly materials in service delivery.

Using CLES' experience in mapping procurement spend, the project examined the two districts procurement spend over the last three years and produced an estimate for how much was being spent by each council in the local economic territory.

Table 1: Ashfield District Council procurement spend 2005-2008

Procurement spend	Amount
Total spend	£106,321,876.18
Spend in Ashfield	£49,378,115.24
Spend in Mansfield	£4,085,995.94
Spend in Ashfield and Mansfield	£53,464,111.18
% Spend in Ashfield	46.4%
% Spend in Mansfield	3.84%
% Total amount spend by Ashfield within functional economic area	50.3%

Looking at Table 2, Ashfield District Council has an impressive record in sourcing goods and services from the combined economy. Over three years, the Council has spent 50.3% of its procurement spend within the Ashfield/Mansfield locality with over 45% staying within the Ashfield District, meaning over £53 million has been spent in the locality.

Table 2: Mansfield District Council procurement spend 2005-2008

Procurement spend	Amount
Total spend	£102,363,742.48
Spend in Ashfield	£6,751,197.12
Spend in Mansfield	£12,967,278.35
Spend in Ashfield and Mansfield	£19,718,475.46
% Spend in Ashfield	6.6%
% Spend in Mansfield	12.7%
% Total amount spend by Mansfield within functional economic area	19.3%

As can be seen from Table 3, the amount and percentage of Mansfield District Council's spend within the locality is not as high as Ashfield's. However, the Council is still spending a fifth of its procurement spend within the locality which amounts to nearly £20 million. While Ashfield managed to source 46.4% of its goods and services from local companies, Mansfield could only manage 12.7%

Table 3: Combined spend of Ashfield and Mansfield Councils within the local economic territory 2005-2008

Procurement spend	Amount
Total spend	£208,685,618.66
Spend in Ashfield	£56,129,312.36
Spend in Mansfield	£17,053,274.29
Spend in Ashfield and Mansfield	£73,182,586.65
% Spend in Ashfield	26.9%
% Spend in Mansfield	8.1%
% Total amount spend by Ashfield within functional economic area	35.1%

Table 3 shows the combined efforts of both councils spend within the joint economic territory. Over three years, both councils have procured goods and services worth a total of £73 million which is a considerable amount of money being initially retained within the local economy. Over a third of procurement spend by both councils is spent on companies based in the districts.

4.3 The commercial economy

Ashfield and Mansfield have a reasonably diverse private sector base, with significant employment in manufacturing (15.9%), wholesale and retail, and health (18.4% and 15.2% respectively). Business services (12.4%) is also a significant employer; however the level of employment within this area is lower than sub-regional, regional and national figures.

Business services have experienced the most growth over the last decade, expanding at a rate much higher than comparators, over doubling in size (albeit from a much lower base). With the fall in manufacturing employment, this represents significant restructuring of the economy with services becoming increasingly important. The other most notable rises in employment have been within public administration activities and construction, growing at rates significantly above the national and regional averages; in the case of construction, the sector accounts for nearly a tenth of total employment.

The business base within Ashfield and Mansfield generally consists of lower value activity, as highlighted in the reliance upon lower wage manufacturing, wholesale/retail, and increasing growth of public sector employment – employment within knowledge based industries (KBIs) is lower within Ashfield and Mansfield when compared to the national average, although reflects a lower propensity of knowledge jobs within the East Midlands. The growth in knowledge intensive jobs in recent years has been relatively low; however when compared to the sub-regional and regional average, at a level comparable with national growth.

Looking at the niche industries within Ashfield and Mansfield, it is immediately apparent that specialties exist within manufacturing, reflecting the high levels of employment within this sector. Some of these are of high value (e.g. manufacture of aircraft and spacecraft (Rolls Royce) and manufacture of medical equipment), although the majority are of lower value (e.g. textiles, manufacture of metal and plastic products). Other key niches within Ashfield and Mansfield surround its construction industry and include building installation, completion and civil engineering, each significant employers' in their own right. Other niches include printing services and wholesale of household goods.

Government data seems to suggest entrepreneurialism within Ashfield and Mansfield is limited, with VAT registrations per 10,000 working age population lower than Nottinghamshire and the region. However, it is notable that VAT de-registrations are lower which suggests that the sectors where start-ups are prevalent have less risk involved, and are generally less knowledge intensive than in other parts of the county and region. This is reflected within the lower levels of knowledge intensive employment.

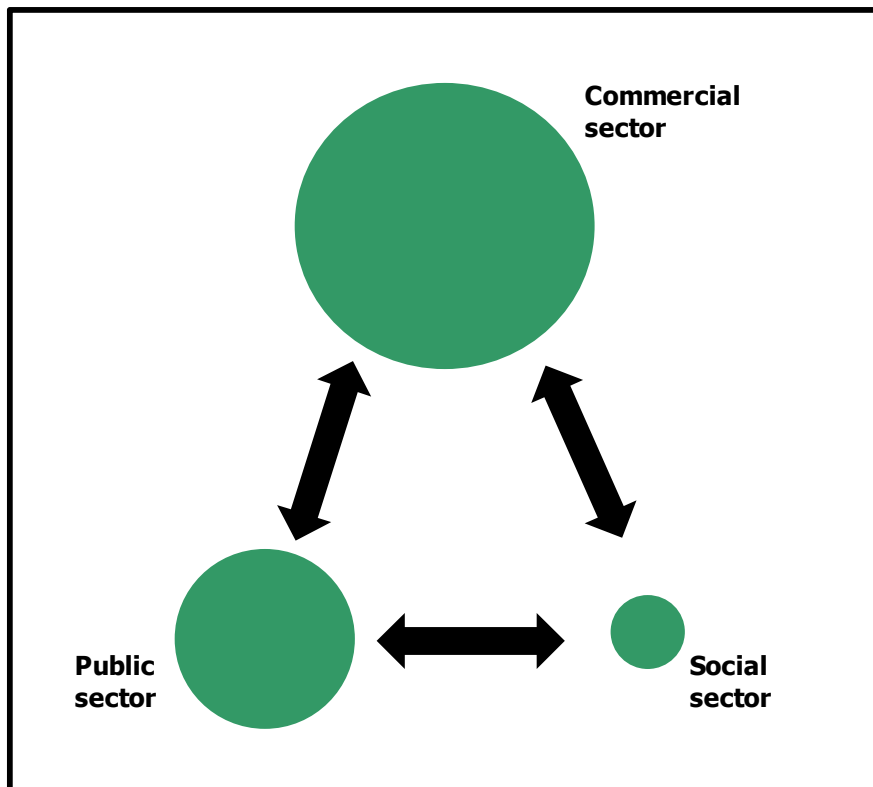
The occupational profile is revealing for Ashfield and Mansfield, in that less people are employed within higher level jobs – managers/senior officials accounting for 13.6%, professionals 7.5%, and associate professionals 13.4% – in each case significantly lower than the county or regional results. This reinforces the case that Ashfield and Mansfield is an area of lower private sector value activity when compared to the wider region and is economically disengaged from the Nottinghamshire core, instead forming its own sub-region.

4.4 The social economy

One of the frustrations CLES has encountered in developing the resilience model is the lack of existing data on the size and nature of the social economy. The sector is incredibly complex and includes a diverse range of organisations varying in size. In 2008, the Office for the Third Sector conducted a national survey of third sector organisations which looked to capture data for national indicator seven – an environment for a thriving third sector. This has proved a useful resource but is unfortunately only available for upper tier and unitary authorities and cannot be broken down into district level data. As we develop the methodology further, we will work to develop ways in which this information can be captured at the local level.

4.5 The size of the three economies

Using the percentage of employment as a proxy, we can visually characterize the size of the three economies. From an analysis of secondary data (see Appendix 1, Table 4), we can see that the private sector accounts for 71.7% of employment across the two districts whilst the public sector accounts for 28.2%. Due to a lack of available data, we are unable to quantify the social economy in this way. As such, we decided upon the sector's relative size based on our qualitative findings. Whilst this is, at present, a rudimentary way of gauging the size of the three economies, when we consider measures four to nine a more qualitative picture emerges about the influence of the sectors on Ashfield and Mansfield's economy.



5 RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE LOCAL ECONOMIC TERRITORY

This section analyses the qualitative and desk based research to outline the findings for how the relationships within the local economic territory are functioning. Our analysis is framed by existing literature on the theory of resilience. From an ecological perspective, Adger (2000)¹⁰ sees social resilience as:

'An important component of the circumstances under which individuals and social groups adapt to environmental change.'

Pike et al (2010)¹¹ add to the debate by introducing a conceptual framework which sees agents, mechanisms and sites as a means of assessing the economic resilience of a place. Building on this existing literature, for each measure CLES has developed three indicators from which we can gain an understanding of how resilient a place is. Under each measure, the report sets out:

- ❑ **resources** – what resources currently exist in the area to facilitate the relationship between the two given sectors?;
- ❑ **relationships** – based on the qualitative data from the interviews, what is the relationship between the sectors?;
- ❑ **responses** – what initiatives, projects or strategies have been implemented to support this relationship, and how might they encourage a more resilient local economy?

5.1 Measure 4 – The commercial economy's relationship with the public sector

The findings from our interviews with private sector representatives show a mixed picture in terms of the commercial economy's relationship with the public sector, especially within the individual districts.

5.1.1 Resources

There are a number of resources within Ashfield and Mansfield that have a role in supporting the relationship between the commercial economy and the public sector.

Mansfield and Ashfield Strategic Partnership (MASP)

Within each district, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is one of the key forums for developing relationships between the public sector and the private sector at a strategic level. MASP especially has strong representation from the private sector.

Mansfield 2020

Mansfield 2020 is a business development and networking organisation which promotes innovation, supports inward investment and offers a platform for dialogue between all agencies in the private and public sectors.

Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce

The Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce cover both Ashfield and Mansfield and play a role in coordinating the private sector in terms of its engagement with the public sector, particularly at the county level. Due to the large geographical spread, the Chamber is the third largest Chamber in the country.

Mansfield and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce

Mansfield and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce is a totally independent business support organisation within Mansfield.

Hucknall Business Voice

Hucknall Business Voice is a group that represents business owners and managers whose businesses have an interest in Hucknall's Town Centre. Their aim is to work with Ashfield District Council regarding all matters affecting businesses in the town centre.

¹⁰ Adger, N. (2000), 'Social and ecological resilience: are they related?', *Progress in Human Geography*, 24, 3, pp.347-364

¹¹ Pike, A., Dawley, S. & Tomoney, J. (2010), 'Resilience, adaptation and adaptability', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy & Society*, 3, pp.59-70

Federation of Small Businesses

The Federation of Small Businesses for the East Midlands has a role in terms of promoting the interests of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and the self-employed in Ashfield and Mansfield.

5.1.2 Relationships

In this section, the key findings regarding the private sector's relationship with the public sector are set out.

Level of business representation differs in each district

The aim for this resilience project was to understand the resilience of Ashfield and Mansfield as one economic area; however it is useful for this section of the report to understand how the commercial sector's relationship with the public sector differs within the two districts.

Within Mansfield, the research found a business community that was keen to be engaged with the public sector and felt it was important to be involved at the strategic level. Mansfield 2020 is the main conduit for private/public relations and its founding ethos was to develop ways in which it could bring the two sectors together. The Mansfield 2020 Board continues to play a key role in trying to influence local affairs, with its members serving on, amongst others¹²:

- Mansfield District and Nottinghamshire County Councils;
- Mansfield Chamber of Trade and Commerce;
- Economic Development Partnership;
- Transport and Economic Development;
- SSP Economic Infrastructure Group;
- Mansfield and Ashfield Strategic Partnership;
- Mansfield Town Centre Partnership Access and Environment Group;
- Learning Support Group;
- Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce.

In Ashfield, the research struggled to encourage any of the business representatives to be involved with the resilience project. The locality did not have its own Chamber of Commerce or business network (Hucknall Business Voice only represents Hucknall Town Centre); if businesses were involved with a network it tended to be Mansfield 2020.

Lack of local level Chamber engagement

Ashfield and Mansfield are not the Chamber's strongest area and, as such, they do not have a strong representation in the sub-region. There is a strong perception outside of Ashfield and Mansfield sub-region that the business community tend to be insular in their view and working practices. While Ashfield and Mansfield businesses worked well together, there was a lack of understanding of the potential business opportunities outside of the District. Although the business link between the Chamber and the two districts was not strong, the Chamber believed that the partnership between the private and public sector in the two districts to be robust due to the strong place identity. The research highlighted an issue with this insular approach, in that it may jeopardise relationships between the private and public sector bodies outside of Ashfield and Mansfield, such as the County Council and the Regional Development Agency.

Procurement

Procurement can be used as an important tool for local authorities to strengthen local markets and supply chains. The County Council has certainly recognised the potential to use public sector money to continue to stimulate local businesses, especially as more traditional regeneration activities will feel the pressure of the impending public sector cuts. The County Council has recognised that a successful procurement strategy can promote and protect the local economy and play a part in reducing the area's carbon footprint through the use of local companies.

The commercial sector in the sub-region believed there was enthusiasm from the local public sector to procure locally but the perception within the private sector was that European Union laws were obstructing this from happening. This is potentially an area where relationships could be strengthened through the dissemination of information.

¹² Mansfield 2020 Annual Report 2009 http://www.mansfield2020.com/_img/Mansfield2020-AnnualReport09.pdf

5.1.3 Responses

Our research highlighted limited examples of where the private sector was taking the lead on delivery programmes that were designed to strengthen relationships. The key response was the creation of Mansfield 2020 which has grown to be the main business forum/network in the area.

Case study – Mansfield 2020¹³

A business development and networking organisation, Mansfield 2020 (formerly known as Mansfield 2010) was set up in the spring of 1991 by local business people with the aim of promoting and revitalising the town after the decline of the traditional mining and textile industries.

It is a partnership between the public and private sectors, with participation drawn from organisations such as Mansfield District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Business Link, EMDA, Mansfield Area Strategic Partnership, Mansfield Town Centre Partnership, West Nottinghamshire College, and businesses within the area.

Mansfield 2020 promotes innovation, supports and nurtures inward investment, and creates a platform for dialogue between all agencies in the private and public sectors. The aim is to drive forward regeneration in the local communities and help guide initiatives for everyone to benefit from.

The organisation holds monthly breakfast meetings, which are extremely well attended by the local business fraternity, with a regular attendance of over 150 members.

5.2 Measure 5 – The public economy’s relationship with the commercial sector

The qualitative findings from the desk review and the interviews show that across Ashfield and Mansfield there is evidence that the public sector has worked hard to develop meaningful relationships with the private sector. Representatives from the public sector recognised the need to successfully engage and include the private sector in strategy and economic development. Although successful initiatives such as the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) have been introduced, there are still challenges around forging a closer working relationship, especially when looking at the individual districts relationships with their respective private sectors. In this section, we examine the relationships between these two spheres of the Ashfield and Mansfield economy.

5.2.1 Resources

There are a number of resources within Ashfield and Mansfield that facilitate the relationship between the public economy and the commercial sector.

Ashfield Partnership and Mansfield Area Strategic Partnership (MASP)

As above, within each district the LSP is one of the key forums for developing relationships between the public and private sector at a strategic level. MASP especially has strong representation from the private sector.

Alliance for Enterprise (LEGI covering Ashfield, Mansfield and Bolsover District Councils)

The Alliance for Enterprise is funded through central government by the LEGI funding stream. Alliance for Enterprise is currently a five year programme worth £6.7 million, designed to encourage and support the growth and development of new and existing enterprises and improve the economy in Mansfield, Ashfield and Bolsover.

Business Improvement Districts

A Business Improvement District is an arrangement through which businesses collectively decide what improvements are necessary to raise their profitability, how they might deliver them and what the total cost might be.

¹³ Mansfield 2020 <http://www.mansfield2020.com/new/about/index.php>

5.2.2 Relationships

In this section, the key findings regarding the public sector's relationship with the private sector are set out.

Relative effectiveness of MASP and the Ashfield Partnership

As with most localities, LSPs are usually the most commonly cited vehicle for public sector bodies to interact with representatives from both the private and social sectors to make strategic decisions for the good of the area. Ashfield and Mansfield have separate LSPs which have different levels of engagement from the private sector. Mansfield LSP, MASP, is the stronger of the two bodies. The private sector is mainly represented by the business membership body, Mansfield 2020, with the Chair sitting on the Board of MASP. Under the Board sits six thematic groups, one of which concentrates on economic development. Mansfield 2020 engages with the LSP by sending anyone from their membership base that has an interest in a particular subject to meetings. This raises an issue for private sector representation, in that the sector is so diverse there is no common view across the board. There is also a specific developer's sub-group that provides the Council with a conduit to access this section of the private sector. MASP has further strong links as its coordinator is the Chair of the Nottinghamshire LSP which provides the group with a link into the county structure.

Results from the research suggested that the Ashfield Partnership is not as strong:

'Ashfield LSP at the moment is a damp squib – it mainly comprises round table chat that does not lead to action. They have no money and therefore no influence.'

The LSP has been working to improve their business representation and have been engaged with the Chamber to acquire a private sector representative, but have yet to be successful. Rolls Royce, one of the biggest employers and source of high end jobs within the District, are technically on the LSP but have only attended a couple of meetings. One area that is showing fruition within the private sector is the interaction with the Federation of Small Business who has been able to provide a good steer on activities. At officer level, it has been acknowledged that the LSP is not as strong as it should be and they are now undertaking a fundamental review of the Sustainable Communities Strategy which involves looking at the structure that created it.

While the individual LSPs within Ashfield and Mansfield are very different in how they function, a common observation for both during the interviews was the issue around whether the organisations had the ability to make strategic decisions which could influence funding. While MASP has better representation from the private sector due to an effective business network which has recognised it is important to be involved with the public sector, Ashfield District Council lack this resource.

As with the LEGI Board, private sector engagement has been a success as they are involved with making 'meaty' decisions. It was suggested that the LSPs are too often dragged into particular local level issues with not enough work being done around developing effective strategy, and there is no particular buy in from partners within the different thematic groups.

Need for more effective engagement

As with Measure 4, the strength of this relationship depends on which district you are examining. In Ashfield, the relationship between the public and commercial sectors needs to be more effectively embedded into economic development, which is part of the scope of the new economic masterplan. Whilst there are vehicles in place to enable the development of a more effective commercial sector (e.g. Sherwood Growth Zone) there needs to be a more mature and effective relationship in place. Ashfield District Council are increasingly seeking to develop their relationships with large employers in the locality, including E.ON and Rolls Royce, to ensure investment in the locality reaps maximum benefit for local communities. The composition of Ashfield's business base also plays a role in the level of engagement the Council can be involved in. The business base is made up of a number of small companies and 'one man bands' therefore, as with all small companies, there is a lack of capacity for engaging with the public sector and bringing forward innovative ideas which could be brought onto the LSP.

In Mansfield the situation is different. The local authority in Mansfield believes there is a good relationship between the public and private sector. Unlike Ashfield District Council, Mansfield has access to more mature business networks (e.g. Mansfield 2020).

These business networks provide the Council with an opportunity to engage the business base which is something that is missing within Ashfield. The qualitative research also identified the change in political administration as a key turning point for strengthening business relationships.

A number of party councillors were replaced by independents whom themselves were local business owners helping to integrate private sector representation and influence into the Council. There are still areas where the relationship could be improved and, if there is to be a properly functioning relationship, the private sector need to be more open in what they are trying to achieve rather than seeing it as a one sided relationship:

'As with any relationship there are trials and tribulations, the main one being businesses continuing to ask "what is the Council doing for me?"'

Scale of the Chamber representation

The sub-regional focus and scale of the Chamber that represents both Ashfield and Mansfield has meant the two districts have struggled to form a positive relationship with the organisation. The Chamber has lacked a strong membership from the Ashfield and Mansfield business base thus there has been no impetus to work with the District Councils. The Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce tend to concentrate their efforts on influencing and working with the County Council which could be the result of the power the districts actually have. Although the Chamber is not strong in the area, the public sector is dubious as to whether a more localised presence would have a great impact.

Working with the private sector to push forward regeneration

Working in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and Alliance SSP, Mansfield District Council funded the development of a BID in Mansfield Town Centre.

Businesses in the town centre recently voted in favour of taking forward the BID. Details of the final vote were:

- 55% by number in favour of setting up the BID;
- 65% in favour by aggregate of rateable value;
- 44% turnout.

The BID, which commences from the beginning of June 2010, will deliver a five year programme to increase visitors, footfall and spending, delivered through a series of actions designed to make the most of the town's natural assets. It will be the first time a significant budget – more than £1.25 million over five years – will have been created for the private sector to spend on what will help lift Mansfield Town Centre and boost business. The contribution has been set at 2% of rateable value to reflect the relatively low rateable values in the town. For most businesses, the average cost is less than £10 a week, of which many of the very small businesses will pay just £3 a week. The BID company will build on those funds by leveraging in contributions and securing support from other sources wherever possible¹⁴.

The BID provides an excellent example of joint working between the public and private sector. While it will be private sector led in terms of outputs, the public sector has worked to ensure the project came together. The project needed to get a majority of businesses to say 'yes' to paying extra rates after what has been a difficult year economically.

While the BID is only in Mansfield, the two District Councils have commissioned King Sturge to look into the possibility of creating an LABV for the two councils so that their assets can be used to stimulate economic development more effectively. Ashfield is a junior partner in the project as Mansfield has more valuable assets. It is a two phased study, of which the first phase will involve studying the assets owned by both Ashfield and Mansfield Councils which could be realistically utilised in a public/private partnership. If Phase 1 provides positive results, Phase 2 will involve looking into how the two councils could put the LABV into place. It is hoped that this type of vehicle will help to develop and strengthen the public/private relationship while overseeing physical regeneration in the area.

¹⁴ Mansfield Bid <http://www.mansfieldbid.com/>

Ensuring the private sector is part of the decision making process

The LEGI Programme has provided the public sector in Ashfield and Mansfield with an effective resource that can be used to engage their business base. The programme has a private sector Chair and has funded a number of delivery programmes which have been specifically designed to provide assistance to the private sector. The bespoke initiatives that have been implemented, which has allowed the programme to tailor projects to tackle the area's specific problems rather than apply fixed delivery programmes, was identified as a key reason for its success.

The key to the successful public/private partnership seems to be because the LEGI management recognised the public sector needs to offer the private sector 'red meat' if they are going to stay involved. As one interviewee commented:

'If there are decisions to make they will stay involved; however if they are just used as a sounding board they will drift off and become disengaged.'

The LEGI Programme actually allows the private sector to shape and make strategic decisions which have the power of having funds attached to them and therefore influence.

Procurement

Procurement is seen as an important tool for the public sector to try and strengthen and support the local supply chain across the two districts. There have been a number of initiatives that have been set up to engage the private sector and advertise the opportunities that exist through public sector contracts. At the county level, the Council has started to work on developing relationships between the corporate procurement and economic development teams, and there is a dedicated Sustainable Procurement Strategy which encourages local sourcing. The County has also created a procurement portal which brings together and advertises tenders from the County and District Councils in one place, increasing the ease of engagement for the private sector.

At district level, there is more engagement from Mansfield than Ashfield in using procurement as an economic development tool. Mansfield District Council are committed to ensuring that procurement activities reap maximum local benefit, whether it be directly through local supply chains or indirectly through community benefits, but recognise the process needs to be open and competitive. On large contracts Mansfield do not allocate on cost alone but seek a number of clauses around apprenticeships and workforce issues. Due to capacity issues in Ashfield District Council, there is no strategic procurement taking place. The District does not have a defined procurement strategy in place and there isn't a full time procurement role therefore sustainable procurement is not a big focus.

The District Councils also benefit from the LEGI Programme which has designated procurement as one of the key strands. The inspiration behind this scheme is to not only concentrate on informing businesses about the opportunities that exist but also work with the councils to help them understand the impact they can have.

5.2.3 Responses

Having outlined the key findings in terms of the relationship between the public sector and the private sector, in this section the report outlines the responses that were highlighted in the qualitative research as ways in which this relationship is being strengthened and supported.

Local Enterprise Organisation (LEO)

LEO is the trading name of the Alliance for Enterprise – the initiative designed due to the successful bid for LEGI funding which aims to support the growth and development of new and existing businesses in the deprived areas of Ashfield, Mansfield and Bolsover.

The goal is to create long term benefits and improve the economy in all three areas by encouraging a culture of local enterprise, leading to more businesses being formed and/or attracted there. The initiative is also designed to help enhance the performance and reduce failure rates of existing local businesses¹⁵.

¹⁵ Local Enterprise Organisation http://www.leobusiness.org/who_we_are/leo.htm

Under the LEO umbrella there are a number of specific initiatives that have been developed by the public sector to support and work with the private sector in Ashfield and Mansfield. The case studies below outline the main responses initiated by the LEGI Programme in Ashfield and Mansfield.

Case study - Enterprise Academy¹⁶

The 'Virtual' Enterprise Academy provides an innovative flagship for the LEGI Programme, with the central aim of embedding a culture of enterprise in young people and providing for potential new business start-ups and a more employment ready/skilled workforce to serve identified business needs.

Through the Academy:

- local businesses and LEGI workers work with teachers to provide school and workplace based mentoring and training to assist students on setting up a business. Students will also be assisted to identify opportunities in local businesses and associated skill requirements;
- young people acquire skills/knowledge to establish their own businesses or become enterprising within the workplace more generally;
- the Academy will provide a hub for the coordinator/tutors to work closely with outreach business and mentoring workers, ensuring links with the access to finance and incubation workspace projects;
- linkages with the Making the Connection project provides direct opportunities to connect young people to employment /training.

The scheme recently held an enterprise competition that paid for the winners to take a trip to America to meet representatives from international companies such the Bank of New York and Reuters.

Case study – Making the Connection¹⁷

Making the Connection aims to connect inward investors and expanding local businesses with local labour resources in the deprived areas, thereby creating new employment and training opportunities and reducing worklessness. The project:

- supplies a project coordinator that works closely with employers to identify skills and training requirements for new employment opportunities. These are matched with jobseeker's existing skills or tailored training is provided;
- has outreach workers that proactively identify and recruit residents from within deprived neighbourhoods and provide ongoing support. Links with Neighbourhood Management Teams help to identify beneficiaries;
- prioritises residents on Income Support and Incapacity Benefit along with Jobcentre Plus priority groups;
- works closely with Jobcentre Plus and inward investment teams in the three partner councils and Alliance SSP. Local Area Agreements provide a focus to integrate wider activity to tackle the issue of worklessness.

¹⁶ Enterprise Academy <http://www.myenterpriseacademy.org/what>

¹⁷ Alliance for Enterprise http://www.allianceforenterprise.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=66&Itemid=56

Case study – One-to-One Business Counselling¹⁸

One-to-One Business Counselling provides an innovative approach to providing flexible, pragmatic support to aspiring entrepreneurs with this resource particularly focused on the deprived neighbourhoods.

- Outreach coaches/mentors target their activity within the deprived neighbourhoods linking with existing neighbourhood renewal community infrastructure and mainstream Business Link advisor.
- Local business/stakeholder panels and support networks have been established to share expertise and advice.
- The project has a highly flexible 'whatever needs to be done' approach to supporting new small businesses.
- It is integrated with Access to Finance project.
- Links to the activity of existing Business Link/Nottinghamshire Business Venture advisors.
- Linkages to other projects such as the Enterprise Academy, Social Enterprise, Property Ladder, Public Procurement and Supply Chain work areas to ensure a joined up approach to new business start-up activity.

Case study – Public Procurement Support Scheme and Supply Chain Network

The public procurement project targets small businesses in the area which require support to enable them to participate effectively in public sector procurement exercises. This is not only about building up the private sector's capacity but involves working with key local public sector procurement staff to encourage them to pursue local purchasing practices to support local business and retain local expenditure.

- The coordinator works closely with existing regeneration and procurement staff at the three authorities, and business advisors to provide bespoke training/support for local businesses to secure contracts.
- Outreach LEGI business support staff ensure penetration to deprived areas.
- Readiness for e-procurement is a particular focus, building on existing innovative pilot work.
- A local advisory and support network comprising existing providers of services to the public sector has been established to help identify new opportunities for strategic partnering between businesses.
- The local Supply Chain Network supports the public procurement project by enabling local businesses to interact more effectively and gather quality information on new business opportunities in the area.
- A dedicated officer proactively works with local businesses to develop a central database and supported website, identifying potential business supply chain opportunities for goods and services.
- Particular opportunities where business expenditure is currently 'leaking' from the area are identified by the project coordinator through analysis of current business activities and close liaison with local business.
- Email alerts of potential supply chain opportunities are targeted to appropriate businesses.
- Existing business networks, particularly those that are sector based, are targeted initially to identify potential common supply chain linkages and maximise the retention of business expenditure locally.
- Potential to create new business networks based on supply chain linkages.
- Linkages with the public sector procurement project also provide additional business opportunities.

¹⁸ Alliance for Enterprise http://www.allianceforenterprise.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=category§ionid=10&id=38&Itemid=56

Case study – Property Ladder and Business Realm¹⁹

The Property Ladder project was devised as there was a need for good quality, small scale business accommodation to serve deprived neighbourhoods.

- The project initially focuses on refurbishing redundant council premises to create a network of managed neighbourhood starter incubation and graduation accommodation to support the start-up and survival rates of businesses.
- Outreach business mentors/advisers help enterprises meet their property needs via this project.
- Forms part of a wider strategic business accommodation approach developed by The Alliance SSP for the former coalfield area.
- This business realm project is based on local neighbourhood renewal pilot schemes to address decline and provide new business opportunities in small commercial and industrial centres directly serving deprived neighbourhoods.
- Action areas across the three districts are identified and assessed for potential commercial viability and prioritised through an initial spatial targeting study.
- The project provides 50% grants to SMEs to allow improvements to vacant or other business premises in need of upgrading. Specific business needs have been identified for anti business crime measures to support business survival.
- Small scale public realm improvements will improve the environment to encourage business investment.
- The project is critical for local shopping centres which provide a community focus for deprived neighbourhoods.
- This programme integrates with the outreach business support and mentoring project and also the Property Ladder project to link physical workspace improvement with business advice.

Source Nottinghamshire²⁰

Source Nottinghamshire provides a single procurement portal for tenders and contracts to supply goods, services and works needed by Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and the seven District and Borough Councils in the County. The source portal has been created with the key objective to make it easier for businesses to find out about new sources of potential revenue, and therefore grow and develop to the benefit of the local economy.

i-centre²¹

The i-centre is a partnership development created by Mansfield District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and the East Midlands Development Agency. The i-centre has been uniquely designed to support, resource and inspire both new and emerging knowledge based companies across the East Midlands.

The dynamic culture within the i-centre is aimed at attracting innovative, high growth, knowledge based businesses that produce and deliver high value added products and services therefore creating local skilled employment opportunities as they develop and grow.

The i-centre works as part of a network of similar developments across the region and has developed well established links with the region's universities and business support agencies.

Mansfield/Ashfield Regeneration Route²²

The Mansfield and Ashfield Regeneration Route was a £30 million road opened in 2004 designed to improve road links between the M1 and the A1. The road was the single biggest ever regeneration project set up by the County Council. One of the major aims for the new route was to encourage new businesses to move into Mansfield and Ashfield in the hope that it would bring up to 10,000 new jobs to the area.

¹⁹ Alliance for Enterprise http://www.leobusiness.org/biz_property.htm

²⁰ Source Nottinghamshire <http://www.sourcenottinghamshire.co.uk/Default.aspx>

²¹ Mansfield i-centre <http://www.mansfieldi-centre.com/>

²² Nottinghamshire County Council http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/traffic_and_travel/roadschemes/marr.htm

Sherwood Business Park²³

Sherwood Business Park has been extremely successful at attracting high profile businesses into the district, making a significant and diverse contribution to the work opportunities available to local communities. The park is a thriving business community of office buildings, leading edge manufacturing facilities, call centre and mixed occupancy offices. It boasts blue chip names like Rolls Royce, Pendragon and E.ON. Sherwood Business Park continues to expand and has around 46 businesses employing in excess of 6,000 employees.

5.3 Measure 6 – The public economy’s relationship with the social sector

The qualitative research undertaken with public sector representatives suggests there is an appreciation of the importance of the public sector working to develop a stronger relationship with the local social sector. However, the social sector admits it is currently unorganised and fragmented which makes it difficult for the public sector to engage when creating strategy and policy.

5.3.1 Resources

There are a few resources within Ashfield and Mansfield that facilitate the relationship between the public economy and the social sector.

Ashfield Partnership and Mansfield Area Strategic Partnership (MASP)

As with the private sector, within each district the LSP is one of the key forums for developing relationships between the public sector and the social sector at a strategic level.

Alliance for Enterprise (Local Enterprise Growth Initiative covering Ashfield, Mansfield and Bolsover District Councils)

The LEGI Programme plays an important role in engaging the social sector as it does with the private sector within Ashfield and Mansfield. The LEGI Programme has a dedicated social enterprise scheme which provides grants and access to finance for social enterprises; however the project team have found that the challenge has been encouraging enough people to bring smart social enterprise projects forward. This particular workstream has been running for two years but there has not been a strong demand for funding.

As the LEGI Programme has a set timeframe and funds, the LEGI Board and partners have started working on an initiative that will continue to generate funds through a social enterprise. Although the majority of the funds will be spent in neighbouring Bolsover, Ashfield and Mansfield will still benefit from the LEO Programme (see Measure 5).

5.3.2 Relationships

This section details the key themes that emerged from the interviews with public sector representatives in terms of the relationship between the public economy and the social sector.

Diversity of the social sector

The social sector in Ashfield and Mansfield is diverse, ranging from small neighbourhood level community and voluntary organisations to large housing associations working across both areas. This diversity has resulted in relationships between the public and social sector, depending on which part of the public sector is engaged and at what level.

Nottingham County Council has a strong record in supporting social enterprise and fund a dedicated resource to support organisations across Nottinghamshire. The County has had a strong policy of working with small neighbourhood community and voluntary organisations in order to help them become more self-sufficient at a time when grant funding from the public sector has dwindled and forced many smaller organisations to diversify their income base.

Representation on the Local Strategic Partnership

The diversity of the social sector means that it can be difficult for the public sector to secure effective representation on organisations such as the LSP. Currently, the social sector is represented on the County LSP but there is recognition that more could be done to strengthen social sector representation.

²³ Ashfield District Council, State of Ashfield Report 2008

At the District level, the relationship between public and social appears to be most secure through the links between the District Councils and the respective Registered Social Landlords. Both Ashfield and Mansfield have been involved in housing stock transfer schemes and, as a result of strong activities, Mansfield is leading on regional choice based letting activities. The relationship between the District Councils at smaller community and voluntary organisations, particularly at a local level, has been more problematic. Evidence from the research demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the breadth and depth of the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) on the part of the District Councils, and uncertainty about the contribution that these organisations made to the economic and social strength of the areas.

This representation issue may reflect the inherent problems associated with the two district LSPs. While MASP is more organised and has a number of sub-groups, there is a feeling in the social sector that it can often be dragged down into particular local level issues rather than concentrating on developing effective strategy. In Ashfield, the LSP is perceived by the social sector as not very strong at all and is more of a talking shop rather than a place to develop creative actions. Ashfield's Sustainable Community Strategy is strong on visions and aspirations but extremely weak on actions; this may be because the group has no money attached to it and therefore no influence. Ashfield has recognised the shortcomings of the current LSP structure in their District and are currently undertaking a fundamental review.

Lack of trust and leadership within the sector and the public sector

Evidence from the research also highlighted underlying tensions within the social sector and between the social and public sectors, and suggested a lack of trust between the two sectors and a lack of strong and cohesive leadership within the social sector itself.

The research suggested this lack of trust and leadership had been further compounded by arguments about funding and grant support, and a general lack of understanding about how the social sector operated and the role it played or should play within communities.

Lack of cohesion within the social sector

Through the research, representatives from the social sector explained that there were concerns about the lack of cohesion and leadership within the social sector itself:

'There is a lot of infighting, lots of duplication, a lack of capacity, and a dependency culture upon the Council as a provider of funds. This is a challenge in that there are not a lot of funds to go round.'

In the interviews, it was clear that there was a desire within the sector to generate a greater level of solidarity between and within different parts of the social sector family and that the sector, despite its diversity, had to work together in order to ensure that it had a strong voice and was able to work effectively with the public and commercial sectors, particularly at a time of increased funding pressures and political uncertainty. It was suggested that the lack of a single overarching umbrella organisation for the social sector had meant that the public sector often struggled in understanding where to go to interact with this part of the economy.

It is not clear of the origins of the perceived lack of trust between the social and public sectors but this is clearly an important issue which both sectors need to work hard to address. Much can be learned from the experience of working together on the LEGI Programme and the lessons of this and others should be used to lay the foundations for a more effective relationship in the future.

Exploring the opportunity of asset transfer

With public sector cuts likely to have a big impact on local government and its ability to support the local economy, Ashfield District Council have recognised the need to work with the voluntary and community sector to move them away from the dependency culture that exists. The Council is hoping to encourage them to become more businesslike in their attitude; however this does not mean using procurement processes and contracting, as has been the case in many localities, but in supporting the CVS organisations to manage and take over community assets.

Ashfield District Council acknowledge there is a long way to go in this relationship but the Council has endorsed the principle of asset transfer and has sought to reopen a number of community centres through community ownership.

Mansfield has also endorsed asset transfer as a way of strengthening the social sector but this is not taking place as quickly as was hoped. The issue in Mansfield is not the asset transfer itself but whether the organisation taking over control of the asset has the capacity to manage it, and keep it going.

5.3.3 Responses

Having outlined the key findings in terms of the relationship between the public sector and the social sector, in this section the report outlines the responses that were highlighted in the qualitative research as ways in which this relationship is being strengthened and supported.

Asset transfer

Ashfield District Council transferred their housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord; however the case study below provides a useful example of how the public and social sector have worked together at a more local level to tackle social issues in a disadvantaged part of Ashfield.

Case study – Acacia Centre

The Acacia Centre is on a disadvantaged housing estate in Ashfield. Various community groups have used the centre since it opened in the 1970s, but in recent years it has become underused and affected by problems such as vandalism, graffiti and anti social behaviour.

In 1993, local charity and broadcast training body, Ashfield Community Radio and Media Training (ACRMT), received a grant from Ashfield District Council to operate from a portable building next to the centre as it lacked the proper equipment for a community broadcasting station and was beginning to fall into disrepair.

By 1999, vandalism of the centre had escalated to the point where room bookings by community groups had fallen substantially. This led the Council to consider demolishing the centre and selling the land because it could not afford to refurbish the building. ACRMT approached the Council and proposed taking over the building on a thirty year lease and developing it as a community centre thus the local authority agreed to enter into a partnership with the organisation.

ACRMT worked closely with the Council to develop plans for the centre and by 2002 there were outline plans, which included large scale demolition and redevelopment of the building to create multi purpose rooms and modernised facilities from which a wider range of activities could be delivered.

In 2007, the Council accepted the group's proposals for a thirty year lease and together they started to draw up a draft asset transfer deal. As part of this, the Council agreed to contribute towards the building's upkeep for the first five years; paying the full cost in the first year and a lesser amount each subsequent year. In turn, ACRMT agreed to use environmentally friendly features in the centre, including efficient under floor heating and rainwater harvesting to cut mains water use.

As part of the draft asset transfer deal, the group also outlined how it proposed to manage the centre in the future and how it intended to take on a community development role by generating activities for local people and making the building available for their use (e.g. supporting fledgling community groups by helping them to find funding).

The project was supported by the £30 million Advancing Assets for Communities Programme, which helps council and community sector partnerships develop plans for asset transfer. Run by the Office of the Third Sector and good cause distributor, The Big Lottery Fund, it is administered by a number of community sector bodies, including the Development Trusts Association.

Having worked with the Council on a bidding application, ACRMT was awarded £995,000 from the Advancing Assets for Communities Programme in 2008. It used the money to hire a developer which began work on the site in May 2009. The final asset transfer deal was signed in December and the centre reopened last month²⁴.

²⁴ Regeneration and Renewal – 8 February 2010 <http://www.regen.net/inDepth/ByDiscipline/Business/982044/Done-deal-Acacia-Centre/>

LEGI Social Enterprise Scheme

The LEGI Social Enterprise Scheme that did exist provided an opportunity for the public sector to generate creative responses to help strengthen the relationship between the two sectors. This particular project funded a project coordinator who worked closely with community groups and neighbourhood management teams to promote opportunities for the development of social enterprises, including providing grant support. The scheme also:

- ❑ provided outreach business support staff who deliver advice and training to existing and potential social enterprises equivalent in quality to that provided for small businesses;
- ❑ established links between the local social enterprise networks together with neighbourhood community focus points and the Property Ladder project (another LEGI scheme) to support the development of social enterprises;
- ❑ helped neighbourhoods to exploit business opportunities arising out of neighbourhood management and the local delivery of public services;
- ❑ linked to potential supply chain opportunities identified through the Supply Chain Network project.

Roseland Community Energy Trust

The LEGI Programme recognises that the money provided by central government has a specific timeframe after which the projects that have been funded will have to find alternative sources of finance which could prove to be difficult as public sector funding is cut. To ensure the programme and the relationships that have been created during the life of the LEGI Programme continue the LEGI Board have started examining other funding avenues in which they can generate income that can be used to fund projects in the locality.

The Roseland Community Energy Trust has been established as a not-for-profit organisation which will be responsible for delivering a community owned wind farm project. The key objective in proposing to develop this scheme is to create an income stream which will be used to deliver a range of community benefits throughout the area, including funding local shops, post offices or a nursery, green energy initiatives, business advice and support, unemployment and training advice, as well as social and educational enterprise development²⁵.

The wind farm will be based in Bolsover and the majority of the income generated by the project will be spent on community projects within Bolsover, but both Ashfield and Mansfield will benefit from the continuation of the LEO (see Measure 5). This service offers a unique support service to local businesses and new start-ups.

5.4 Measure 7 – The social economy’s relationship with the public sector

The findings from the qualitative research show that a relationship between the social and public sector does exist but a number of issues are preventing a fruitful relationship. There is a sense of disengagement in strategy development across both districts and challenges around whether the social sector could ever really benefit from local procurement opportunities. However, the social sector acknowledges that the weak relationship is most probably from a lack of interaction and organisation from their side and that there is a need to demonstrate capacity and joined up working if they are to play a bigger part in the local economy.

5.4.1 Resources

There are some resources that facilitate the relationship between the social economy and the public sector in both Ashfield and Mansfield.

Ashfield Links Forum

Ashfield Links Forum is an umbrella and support body for charitable and voluntary organisations within Ashfield offering services.

²⁵ Roseland Community Energy Trust <http://www.rcet.co.uk/>

Mansfield CVS

Mansfield CVS offers similar services to Ashfield Links Forum but in Mansfield. The organisation provides support for local voluntary and community groups while developing and maintaining links across the public and private sectors. They are the key group in influencing strategic partnership activity and act as a voice for the voluntary and community sector.

5.4.2 Relationships

This section details the key themes that emerged from the interviews with social sector representatives in terms of the relationship between the social economy and the public sector.

Challenges for the social sector

While there is evidence of a relationship between the social and public sector, it seems the social sector needs to get its own house in order before it can truly to start to play its part in the local economy and form stronger relationships with the public sector.

The social sector across both Ashfield and Mansfield is fragmented and has tended to lack leadership locally, which can mean outside perceptions of the sector are negative. One respondent commented:

'It is the worst example of people working together and to describe it as a fragmented approach would be an understatement. There is no homogeneous whole and it is too complex as a sector for the public sector to pick out best practice.'

This is compounded by the fact that CVS bodies tend to be quite isolated and limited to their immediate area. The majority of organisations within this sector are localised and work at the neighbourhood level therefore associating more with a particular area than the district they are based in.

To improve the relationship, the sector acknowledges that if it doesn't get better at working in partnership then the sector will shrink (e.g. there are currently seven CVS' in the County but none of them are working together, neither is there a discernable link between the two sectors in Ashfield and Mansfield).

Missed opportunities at the strategic level

In Ashfield, the relationship between the social and public sector has been quite poor and was described by one interviewee as:

'A relationship of missed opportunities.'

However, the blame does not lie fully at the public sector's door; the research found that the CVS has tended to keep the local authority at arm's length with one interviewee suggesting the public sector had always had an open door attitude to the social sector (e.g. Ashfield's Chief Executive sit's on Ashfield Links Board). The research therefore suggests particular parts of the social sector have not played their part in trying to foster and maintain a strong relationship (e.g. there has been a fairly limited interest in engaging with the LSP).

In Mansfield, the story is slightly different, in that it is a mixed relationship depending upon which part of the public sector the social sector is engaging with; however at the strategic level it was felt that MASP was not a particularly strong body. Rather than having a strategic focus, it was often dragged down into particular local level issues which meant not enough time and work was spent developing effective strategy. There was also an issue around the level of buy in from partners working in the different thematic areas.

Room for improvement

At local authority level, the qualitative research suggests that the relationship is not as strong as it could be. Challenges for the relationship included the social sector having the opinion that the public sector did not understand the capabilities and structure of the social sector and that they could sometimes be thought of as a nuisance rather than a partner. An example of this tension was seen through the Mansfield Community Development Project whereby the Council took a decision to co-locate with a social enterprise and rented rooms within this building. Unfortunately, the Council took the decision to move out and this was seen as evidence within the social sector that there was no commitment from the local authority to their sector.

There are areas however where the relationship has a grounding and could be built upon to improve involvement at the strategic level. The research identified that they tended to be a more positive relationship at officer level within the authorities and there has been a lot of work taking place on asset transfer schemes.

Health and well-being provides an interesting prospect

There is a more constructive relationship between the Mansfield social sector and the NHS. The health service is willing to use the social sector but again there is an issue around whether they understand the concept of the third sector and tend to see them as typical delivery organisations. The social sector identified health and well-being as an area where the social and public relationship could really be strengthened. The skills and knowledge available in the social sector could provide a useful tool for designing and implementing delivery around this agenda.

Impending public sector cuts and the opportunity of procurement

Nottinghamshire County Council is currently implementing large public sector cuts which in turn will have an effect on the budgets of the District Councils. This has the potential to affect the District's engagement with existing social sector schemes and initiatives. Using procurement to counter this impact could be seen as an opportunity, but currently the social sector in Ashfield and Mansfield do not seem to be geared towards making the most of local procurement. The qualitative data collected suggested the social sector believed the public sector did not have the right infrastructure to support them in applying for opportunities.

The research identified that currently the social sector were not aware of the procurement opportunities available through local government and that they did not have the knowledge and expertise needed to deliver these types of contract. The social sector has thus far relied on local government through grants and there would need to be a big organisational change in the sector if the balance between procurement and grants changed.

There is also some hesitancy within the social sector around relying on public procurement rather than grants. As public sector cuts become more stringent, procurement will have to become even more efficient, meaning values and ethics will not be taken into consideration during the tender process. Social enterprises would have to bid for contracts in consortiums to increase capacity and respondents suggested this would not be seen favourably within procuring departments as the public sector tends to prefer working with large, well equipped organisations that can carry out contracts.

Capacity

The social sector acknowledges that to improve its relationship with the public sector, the sector will need to work much harder in establishing the benefits of the work they do and make these more transparent. Currently, capacity within the social sector is an issue and this is a big barrier to having a relationship with the public sector. To form a more strategic and worthwhile partnership, the CVS understands it needs to show it has the capacity to deliver on public sector agendas and change the perception (and perhaps reality) that the sector is not up to the job.

5.4.3 Responses

First-Contact

First-Contact is an over 50's referral scheme in Mansfield. It involves a local authority officer going through a checklist of potential personal issues with individuals who approach the Council for help and referring them onto the relevant social sector organisation. It enables people to receive vital services to stay safe and independent in their own homes. To date, there have been 600 referrals.

Self Help Scheme

The Self Help Scheme was developed by Ashfield Links Forum but funded by the local Primary Care Trust. The scheme acts as a support mechanism for self help groups, providing training and support, while advertising the self help groups available to residents²⁶.

²⁶ Ashfield Links Forum Self Help Scheme http://www.ashfieldlinks.org.uk/default.asp?id=introduction_7

5.5 Measure 8 – The commercial economy’s relationship with the social sector

The relationship between the commercial economy and the social economy, perhaps unsurprisingly, is a less obvious link. In this section, the report outlines the key findings regarding the private sector’s relationship with the social sector.

5.5.1 Resources

There are limited resources in existence that are working to support the relationship between the commercial and social sector. The LSPs mentioned in previous measures are the only real resource that has been designed to facilitate interaction between these two parts of the economy. Mansfield 2020 has some interaction with the social sector and, as highlighted in previous measures, the infrastructure for strategic umbrella groups could be used to strengthen this relationship.

There is evidence of private sector representatives being involved with social sector organisations through sitting on the Boards of local social organisations but this takes place at the individual level.

5.5.2 Relationships

From the qualitative evidence gathered, there is very little evidence of any interaction at the strategic level between the private sector, with the various social sector organisations that exist within Ashfield and Mansfield at the strategic level.

Mansfield 2020 felt its structure and networks provided an opportunity for social enterprises to become more involved with the private sector within the locality and that MASP also offered a useful medium in which leaders from both sectors could come together to try and foster relationships.

Evidence of a lack of understanding about the social economy

From our interviews with private sector representatives within Ashfield and Mansfield, there was some suggestion that the umbrella bodies for businesses in the area do not really understand or recognise the potential of the social sector. One interviewee mentioned that he was not aware of anything the social sector was involved in and therefore the profile of the sector must be poor across Ashfield and Mansfield. One respondent commented:

‘The social sector in Ashfield and Mansfield needs to establish a much clearer identity.’

Therefore it would seem to suggest that to start strengthening or even developing relationships between these two parts of the economy, the social sector needs to develop a clear and succinct message about the important role they play within a local economy and the opportunities that exist for the private sector through the development of stronger working relationships. A stronger working relationship would also allow private sector organisations to engage more effectively with the communities they are based within.

5.5.3 Responses

The research failed to identify clear examples of successful partnership working between the commercial and social sectors. While there may be some level of strategic interaction through the LSPs and Mansfield 2020, this has failed to translate into creative responses which build resilience or would allow this relationship to adapt and be flexible if the Ashfield and Mansfield locality suffered from an environmental or economic shock.

5.6 Measure 9 – The social economy’s relationship with the commercial sector

As with Measure 8, the relationship between the social and commercial sector is not strong but there is potential for improvement.

5.6.1 Resources

Again, there are limited resources that have been established to support and strengthen the relationship between the social and private sector. As with Measure 8, the LSPs are the main way in which representatives from the sectors interact at a strategic level.

5.6.2 Relationships

Social sector representatives from both Ashfield and Mansfield feel there is currently no viable commercial relationship with the private sector. The level of interaction between these two groups above certain individual relationships has not yet been fostered.

Structure and function of the social sector

One of the key reasons identified as being a challenge to the social and private sector relationship is the overall composition of the social economy and the way it functions. The social economy is an umbrella term for a number of different types of organisation and the fragmented structure that exists within the sector is confusing for representatives from other parts of the economy. Historically, this sector has grown and developed thanks to a grant system which means organisations within the social sector are unlikely to think in a business focused way. As one interviewee commented:

'When business people are involved in the CVS they take their business brains off when they come to meetings – they approve things they would never approve in their own business!'

Therefore, there may be a feeling that there is no beneficial learning or networking opportunities between the two sectors due to the difference in working practice. This suggests there is interest from the private sector to get involved but a lack of appreciation around the challenge of working in the social sector, and that existing perceptions of how social enterprises function may be outdated.

Perception of the social sector

The representatives interviewed recognised a lack of knowledge from the private sector in terms of what the social sector does and whether it actually has anything to offer. The main issue seemed to revolve around the different mindsets of each part of the economy, in that the private sector does not see what the social sector can offer them which would make a relationship worth pursuing, while the social sector has a lack of understanding as to what businesses expect. The key point raised during the interviews was that to have a greater impact, both sides needed to understand what the other side can really do for them and, to do this, the social sector needs to package its offer to the private sector effectively.

Untapped potential

While it was acknowledged that the strength of the current relationship does need work, the social sector still saw untapped potential for stronger working partnerships. Use of infrastructure, volunteering opportunities, access to a new funding streams and the talent pool within the CVS were all mentioned as areas that provided the most scope for joint working. Within Mansfield, it was felt the umbrella group provided the best opportunity to take the lead on coordinating any future activity.

5.6.3 Responses

Having outlined the key findings in terms of the relationship between the social and private sector, this section outlines the responses that were highlighted in the qualitative research as ways in which this relationship has, and is, being strengthened and supported.

Business Incubation Unit

Until recently, Mansfield Woodhouse Community Development Group had a contract with Mansfield District Council to manage a Business Incubation Unit which provided office space for private sector entrepreneurs and business start-ups. This provided a good example of all three parts of the local economy working well to support each other and a unique resource for cross fertilisation between the private and social sector. However, the social enterprise managing the business incubation centre recently lost the contract and the management of the site will now be taken forward by the Council.

Understanding the social sector

Nottingham Trent University Business School recently sent representatives to visit Mansfield CVS to understand the activities they were involved in to bridge the gap between the lack of understanding between the two sectors.

5.6.4 Measure 10 – Broad local economic context

Ashfield and Mansfield have recognised that together they form a functional economic area. They have their own commuter patterns and there is a great deal of in-commuting between the two districts.

The analysis suggests Ashfield and Mansfield recognise the importance of being aware of how the broad economic context can affect its local economic territory, but this is more at a regional and national level rather than appreciating their firms are competing in a global marketplace which offers potential threats and opportunities. While various strategies mention the economic links to county and regional endeavours, there is no recognition that the area's relatively strong manufacturing base could come under threat from the four²⁷ major developing economies if companies decide to move abroad to take advantage of lower costs.

5.6.5 The economic prosperity gap model

Ashfield and Mansfield have looked to learn from best practice around the country for the development of their joint economic masterplan. One area that Ashfield and Mansfield visited and spoke to was the Creative Sheffield team. One of the key strands to the development of their Masterplan was the creation of a baseline document which sought to review the competitiveness of the Sheffield economy as one of a number of inputs into the Review stage of the Sheffield Economic Masterplan. The Review of Economic Competitiveness was not intended to provide a comprehensive picture of the city's economy and did not attempt to cover the full range of socio-economic indicators. Instead, it focused on the factors which underlie competitiveness in the city, looking at long term trends in areas such as population, employment, enterprise and learning and skills to provide an understanding and context of the base position from which the city will move forward over the next fifteen years. Drawing on the wide range of existing data, research and publications, the Review of Economic Competitiveness identified a series of key issues which may impact on the future development of the city's economy. Together with the other elements of the Review stage²⁸, the findings feed into a Position Report identifying the key challenges facing Sheffield, including an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats²⁹.

One of the key strands of Sheffield's baseline document was a prosperity gap model which allowed the city to understand how its economy was faring against the UK average. Ashfield and Mansfield commissioned CLES consulting to produce a similar model for the Ashfield and Mansfield sub region to supplement the resilience project being undertaken.

5.6.6 Components of prosperity

An economy's output is driven by a range of factors. Figure 2³⁰ illustrates how GVA per capita may be disaggregated into a number of measurable components.

Figure 2: Components of economic prosperity – Ashfield and Mansfield model

Model	GVA component			
Ontario ³¹	Labour profile	Labour utilisation	Labour intensity	Labour productivity
Ashfield and Mansfield	Potential labour supply	Real employment rate	Hours worked	Productivity

The following sections examine the relative performance of both Ashfield and Mansfield against each of these components in turn, identifying the key factors that contribute to the output gap, covering the following:

²⁷ China, India, Brazil and Russia

²⁸ Spatial Framework, *EDAW*, Policy Review, *EDAW*, Property and Land Market Assessment, *GVA Grimley*, Knowledge Economy Review, *Huggins Associates*, International Learning Review, *Greg Clark*

²⁹ Sheffield Economic Masterplan: Review of Competitiveness, EKOS Consulting

³⁰ Building upon a model developed by Ontario's Taskforce for Competitiveness

³¹ Model derived from Agenda for our Prosperity, Ontario's Task Force on Competitiveness

- ❑ **potential labour supply** – this relates to the size of the working age population; the number of residents aged 16 to retirement age. This is affected by standard mortality rates, birth rates and net migration to/from the study area;
- ❑ **real employment rate** – this relates to the number of residents (of working age) in employment (excluding residents who are unemployed and actively seeking work, and the economically inactive);
- ❑ **hours worked** – this shows the average hours per week worked, taking account of full-time and part-time working;
- ❑ **productivity** – this shows the average productivity of a worker from Ashfield and Mansfield based upon the total GVA (profits + wages) divided by the labour force (number of employees).

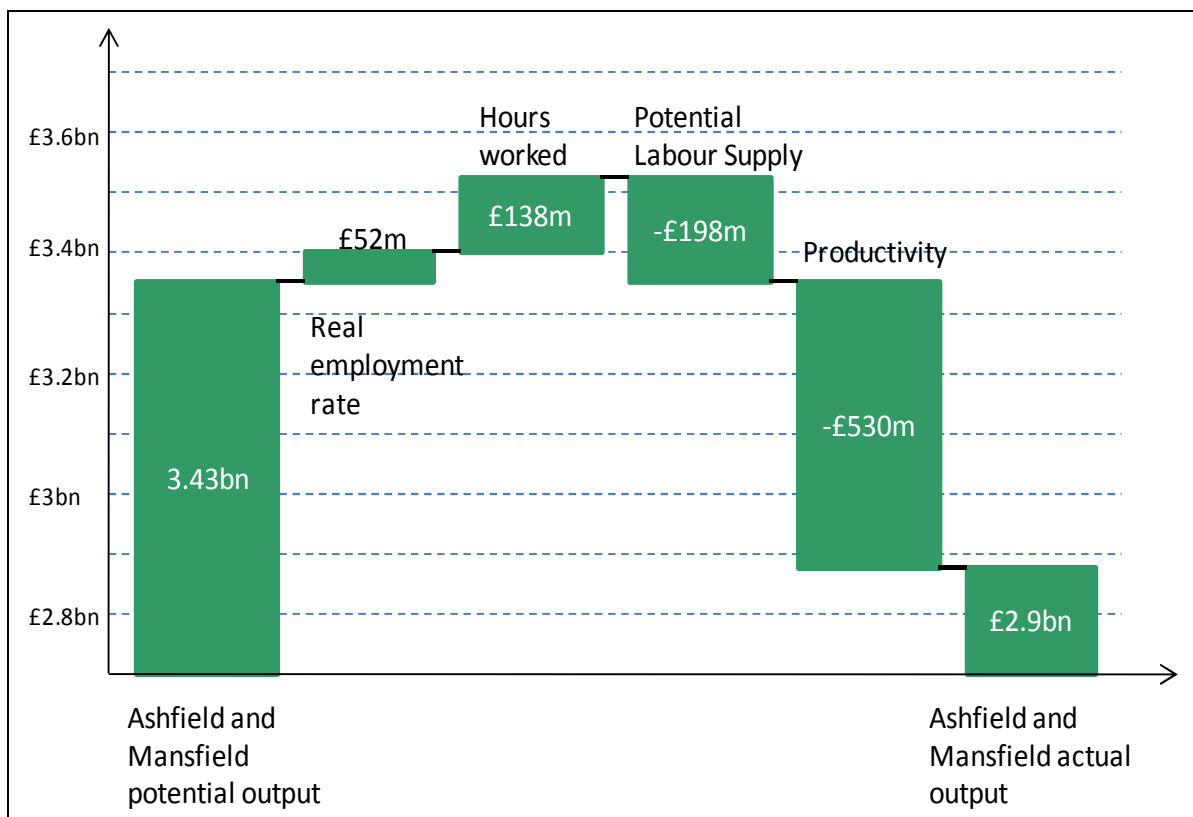
5.6.7 Methodology

The first two metrics are derived from ONS Mid Year Estimates of Population and the ONS Annual Population Survey (APS); hours worked is derived from the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE); productivity data are derived from both ONS Regional and Sub-regional GVA data; and local GVA estimates ('actuals') modelled by Experian³². Each metric is compared with the equivalent national average, with the data aggregated to calculate the GVA output that 'could be achieved' if each of the relevant metrics were performing at, or above, the UK average.

5.6.8 The prosperity gap model

GVA currently stands at £2.9 billion in the study area. The prosperity analysis (Figure 3) suggests this could theoretically be up to £3.4 billion (an additional £500+ million per annum) if the study area was performing at or above the national average across the key metrics analysed.

Figure 3: Ashfield and Mansfield prosperity gap model



³² From the Regional Economic Forecasting Model, including Ashfield and Mansfield

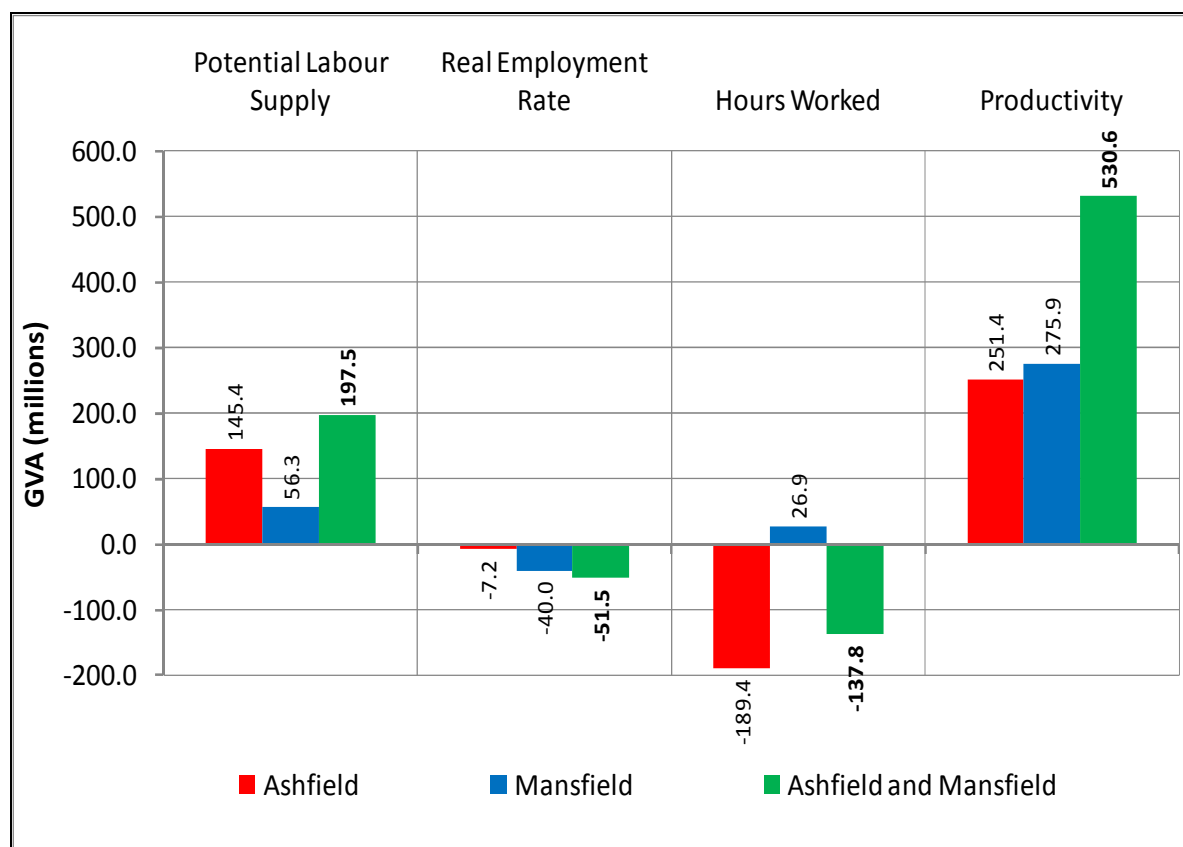
Levels of productivity within a locality are driven by a number of factors, including levels of:

- ❑ skills;
- ❑ enterprise activity;
- ❑ innovation;
- ❑ investment (research and development);
- ❑ competition (trade);
- ❑ industrial structure (the proportion of high value industries within the economy).

How effectively these factors are combined to generate a unit of output is equally important in determining long term economic performance.

Figure 4 breaks down the individual components of the prosperity gap model to show the difference that exist within each district. The graph shows that when combined Ashfield and Mansfield has a higher than average score for the real employment rate and the hours worked. Interestingly hours worked is especially strong in Ashfield while there is a gap in output in Mansfield. However the area scores less well against the remaining two components, as also demonstrated in figure 3, with productivity output providing the main gap.

Figure 4: Potential of Ashfield/Mansfield economy in their component parts



5.6.9 Conclusion

As previous work by Experian shows³³, the lack of deeper labour markets (professional and managerial jobs available) within the business services sector compared with the UK average has had an impact on the local economy. This, combined with a weaker track record in workforce skill levels (progression and retention of graduate talent being an issue), weaker expenditure on investment and innovation (a lack of fine grained data restricts analysis), and stronger performance in enterprise formation and survival (up until the impact of the recession that has yet to play out) has impacted the way the local economy relates to the broad economic context.

³³ Ashfield and Mansfield: Economic Analysis Final Report June 2009

Workforce

The growth of an area's working age population is an important indicator to both its economic performance and future potential. The Nottingham area, including Ashfield and Mansfield, has experienced sustained growth up to 2006 before falling away. This is in contrast to the wider regional level of growth which has been consistently strong. Continued lack of growth of the working age population could have consequences for economic prosperity and productivity, with a smaller labour pool to meet the demand for potential jobs.

Productivity

As the prosperity gap model above illustrates, the level of productivity is having a real impact on the economic output of the sub-region. As described, the possible reasons for why productivity is lagging within the area are:

- lack of deeper labour markets;
- the number of professional and managerial jobs available within the business services sector compared with the UK average;
- a weaker track record in workforce skill levels (progression and retention of graduate talent being an issue);
- weaker expenditure on investment and innovation.

Impact of the recession

The impact of the recession upon the locality's labour market has been noticeable. Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimant rates have increased markedly through the recession especially compared to the Nottinghamshire average (4.7% compared to 3.6% in January 2010).

Ashfield and Mansfield also suffer from a high level of Incapacity Benefit/Employment Support Allowance claimants with rates of around 10%; this provides a problem for the local economy in that it is limiting the workforce available to local companies.

Difficulties with attracting or retaining high level skills

In terms of labour market performance and skills, there is a significant positive correlation between high level graduate skills and the proportion of the workforce within knowledge industries. Ashfield and Mansfield residents have a low level of high skill levels (17.6% qualified to Level 4+ and only a third of all residents containing at least a Level 3+). These are considerably lower than both Nottinghamshire and the East Midlands levels which could have an impact on the private sector within the area.

5.6.10 Measure 11 – Environmental factors

The research found evidence from both local authorities that sustainable development was important to their localities. Both councils have signed up to the Nottingham Declaration³⁴ which commits councils to work with central government to contribute, at a local level, to the delivery of the UK Climate Change Programme.

Mansfield's core strategic scoping report conducted a review in order to assess what options would be most sustainable for the future development of the Mansfield District and identified the key sustainability issues that are affecting the area. The report acknowledged a need to:

- reduce the District's carbon footprint by reducing CO₂ emissions from transport and buildings;
- ensure location of development makes efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- ensure economic growth goes hand in hand with a high quality environment.

Ashfield recognised a need for:

- better parks and public spaces;
- greener businesses;
- increase in recycling and energy efficiency needs.

³⁴ Energy Savings Trust <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/nottingham/Nottingham-Declaration/The-Declaration>

The qualitative research did not identify any major sub-regional working taking place on delivery projects designed to tackle environmental issues.

5.6.11 Measure 12 – Local history, identity and context

During the 1990's, coal mining employment collapsed dramatically. This removed the economic rationale of coalfield places, impacting on the cultural and social structure of the locality. In 2000, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation produced a piece of research looking at how regeneration could deal with the consequences of industrial decline³⁵. Mansfield was one of the two specific test cases for the report. The conclusions found that former coalfields were unique in character in that they were neither rural nor urban; however the housing estates that existed were in the worst urban areas while their isolation is comparable to rural areas. Although there had been regeneration options put in place, the coalfields remain blighted by severe socio-economic problems relating to unemployment, long term sickness and poverty. Former coalfields were also disadvantaged as attracting investment in manufacturing or in service activities, such as call centres, did not necessarily alleviate problems of poverty. Often the prime attraction for such companies was the availability of large numbers of people in search of work. Companies were able to recruit rigorously and selectively build workforces of people willing to work flexibly for low wages. Looking at current data the issue of low wages still seems to be an issue for the sub-region.

The Coalfield areas did attract support for community initiatives from national government and the European Union, however the requirements for partnership working, competition and constant innovation were identified as difficult obstacles for community initiatives. The resilience research seems to suggest that these challenges are still an issue for the social sector in Ashfield and Mansfield.

Looking at the scale of deprivation within the local authorities, Mansfield has the bigger challenge with the local authority ranked as the 34th most deprived area in England. Looking at the local level, the scale of the challenge is apparent with two of its Super Output Areas (SOAs) in the top 1% most deprived in England, 8 in the top 5% most deprived, and 28 in the top 20% most derived. Ashfield also has problems being ranked the 81st most deprived local authority in England. Looking at the local level, the scale of the challenge is not as severe as Mansfield but there are still issues to be addressed, with 1 SOA in the top 5% most deprived and 15 in the top 20% most deprived.

Although Ashfield and Mansfield have obviously moved on since 2000, some of the legacies from the former coalfield past are still apparent from the information gathered. This corroborates the evidence found (Measure 10) and shows that the local area has not been able to break free from its coalfield past and still suffers from high worklessness and low end jobs, which is acting as a drag to economic growth³⁶.

5.6.12 Measure 13 – Governance

Governance plays a big part in determining the ability of a locality to adapt and be flexible to local economic or environmental shocks. The higher up the chain of governance a certain place is, the bigger the capacity to develop and fund creative responses to particular issues.

Relationship between Ashfield and Mansfield District Council

The first level of governance that should be explored is the relationship between Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils. The evidence gathered during the qualitative research has clearly identified good working relationships between the two District Councils. The history of joint working has created a strong positive relationship and a strong driver of this is the complimentary issues and profiles the localities have; both localities have experienced similar patterns of industrial decline. The two districts have recognised they are outside the City of Nottingham's economic influence and that, as a functional economic area, they have their own dynamics in terms of population, travel to work and commuter patterns.

Joint working is evident across a number of service areas and with public sector funding being constrained over the next few years, the localities recognise the potential for shared services which

³⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Coalfields regeneration: dealing with the consequences of industrial decline, April 2000
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/coalfields-regeneration-dealing-with-consequences-industrial-decline>

³⁶ Communities and Local Government, Indices of Deprivation 2007
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/deprivation07/>

will provide one way of enabling efficiencies through economies of scale. The two areas already have a single investment plan for strategic housing which preceded guidelines from the Homes and Communities Agency.

Economic development is an area where there has been a particularly large amount of collaboration; job creation and sustainability are important to both areas thus there is less room for disagreement. The two districts have started working on an innovative joint strategic economic development plan that will aim to capitalise on the functional economic geography that exists. It is hoped the masterplan will also help achieve greater value for money by allowing closer collaboration on appropriate cross border projects and the potential for leveraging in greater public sector funding and private sector investment.

Political issues

While the research acknowledged the good relationships that existed at officer level within the Councils, it was felt this wasn't as secure at the political level. As the two districts embark on further joint working, this has also generated a challenge for the two districts in terms of managing political leadership. It is felt within the locality that it would be difficult to generate genuine political collaboration as each set of politicians would fear the potential loss of influence within their area.

'There is certainly duplication of effort across Ashfield and Mansfield – it is perfectly conceivable that the area should be seen as one functional economic area and governance arrangements supporting that structure should be considered. The partnerships would proliferate, however the genuine sharing of power wouldn't.'

This political instability has often led to anxiety amongst officers when it comes to local and joint leadership. This political rivalry has already been seen to hinder positive working relationships as identified in Measure 6.

Working within the two tier system

Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils are part of the two tier local government structure. They sit under Nottinghamshire County Council and are therefore susceptible to decisions taken at the county level. The relationship was described as being up and down and this could again be down to political influences; it was suggested officer level relationships were good but there were some differences of opinion at the political level, especially around local government reorganisation. However, it was acknowledged that there is a need for the three parties to have a close working relationship, as there is a great deal of crossover between the three authorities (e.g. while the County has responsibility for issues such as transport, the District is the planning authority). No one level has a responsibility for economic development therefore there is overlap and duplication at the county/district level which can lead to a lack of clarity over who is leading on projects.

As mentioned, Ashfield and Mansfield are impacted by strategic decisions made at the county level and there is not much they can do to influence this. As one interviewee commented:

'In this type of environment size matters and two districts are not going to have much sway in influencing governance arrangements.'

The County has recently announced that it has to find £80 million savings over the next three years. This shortfall in cash will have unavoidable impacts on local level initiatives being taken forward by Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils.

Complexity of governance

Being district level also means the two authorities sit beneath a crowded governance landscape. Another interviewee recognised the scale of the challenge for the two districts if they ever needed to influence agendas:

'A big challenge for Ashfield and Mansfield is that there are currently too many layers of government. As districts, you have the city (Nottingham), county, sub-region, region and national government sitting above you.'

There are a number of structures above them that have the power to influence and affect economic development in their locality. When the Learning and Skills Council had to delay funding decisions on 79 projects, Ashfield and Mansfield lost 75% of the funding needed for their planned 'super college' which was to be used as a trigger for more development opportunities along the

Mansfield/Ashfield regeneration route³⁷. This setback had a huge impact on the locality; however there have also been some positive influences from national government. Ashfield and Mansfield (and Bolsover) successfully submitted a bid for LEGI money which has enabled an extra £6.7 million to go into developing innovative resources and programmes that aim to strengthen the working relationships between the public, private and social sectors (see Measures 5 and 6).

³⁷ <http://www.chad.co.uk/news/Funding-blow-for-96m-39super.5055217.jp?CommentPage=1&CommentPageLength=10>

6 RESILIENCE

The theory underpinning the resilience model is that a locality is stronger if the three different components of a local economic territory are working together in a collaborative and efficient manner. If the synergy between all the component parts is working well, then resilience is an emergent property of the system.

So far, this report has utilised the quantitative and qualitative data to provide a narrative on the relationship between the three spheres of the combined economy. It has also considered the broader issues that have an influence on the economy: the economic context; the need to work within environmental limits; local identity, history and context; and government. In this section of the report, we bring these findings together to assess the resilience of each of the measures before finally making a value judgement as to the overall resilience of Ashfield and Mansfield's combined economy. Reflecting the largely qualitative nature of the research, with semi-structured interviews being the primary method, we have avoided giving the measures a 'score'. Instead, a more interpretive approach is adopted with each measure positioned on a scale from brittle to resilient.

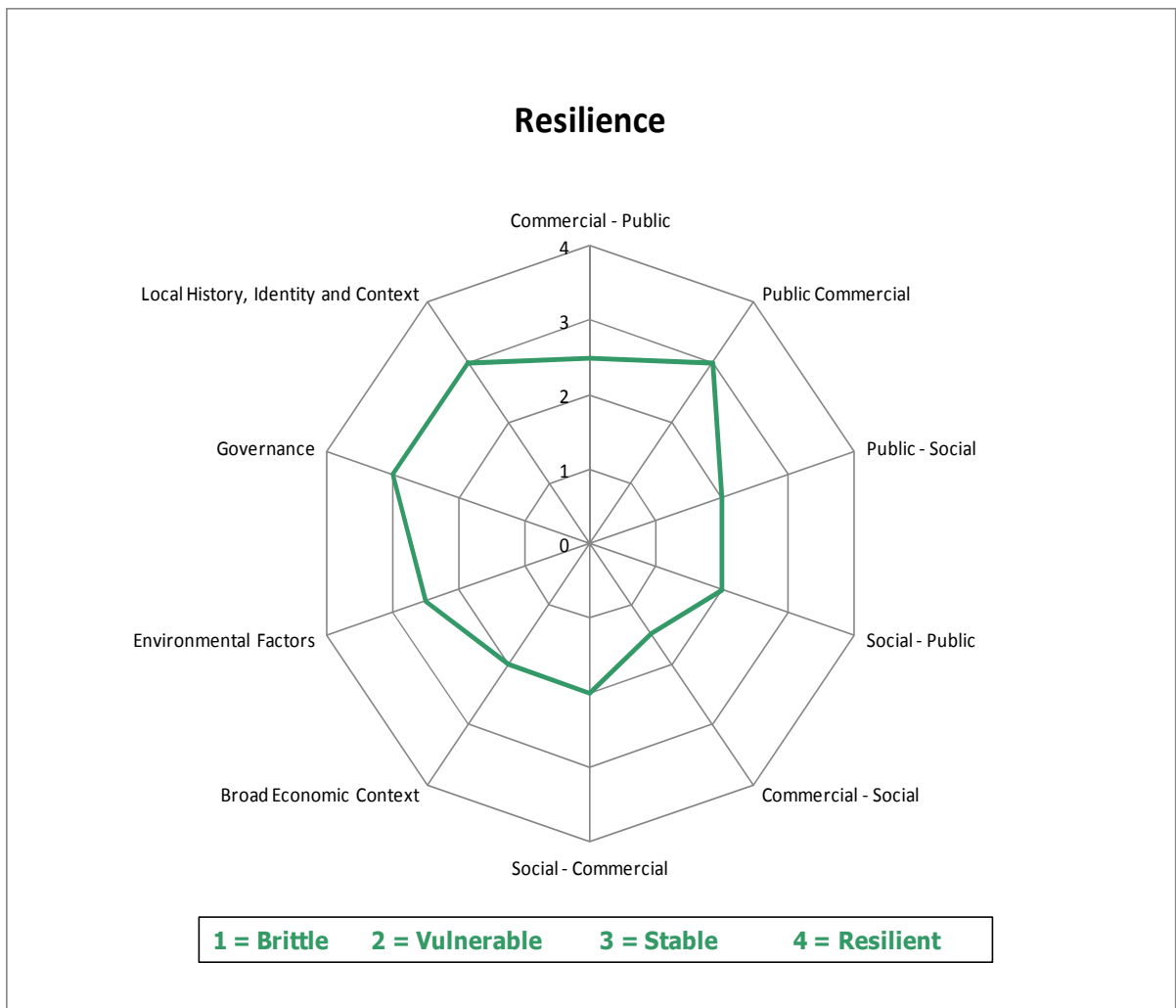
6.1 The resilience of relationships within the local economic territory

Having provided an overview of the role of the three spheres of the economy in the Ashfield/Mansfield economy, in the following section of the report we assess the resilience of the six relationships across the private, public and social sectors. Each measure is positioned on a scale ranging from 'Resilient' to 'Brittle'. The four descriptive 'rankings' are defined as follows:

- ❑ **Resilient:** There is compelling evidence of robust relationships between the different spheres of the local economy, and these relationships have been developed in bold and innovative ways. The three sectors are working together very effectively and are having a clear positive impact on the locality, evident in partners' responses to local challenges and wider economic influences. The strong relationships and resources present make the area very well prepared to deal with economic, social and environmental shocks.
- ❑ **Stable:** There is evidence of sound relationships between the different spheres of the local economy. There is adequate communication between the sectors, often facilitated by dependable forums. There is some evidence that the sectors are working together well, supported by examples of where the sectors have come together to develop local responses to challenges. The relationships and resources present make the area relatively prepared for shocks and there is some evidence that partners are responding to wider economic influences. However, more creative collaboration is required in order to strengthen local economic resilience.
- ❑ **Vulnerable:** The relationships between the different sectors are significantly underdeveloped. Whilst there may be some communication, it tends not to be sustained or strategic. As such, relationships may be precarious. There is very limited evidence of the sectors coming together to respond to local challenges or wider economic influences. Without improvement, the local economy will be vulnerable to shocks.
- ❑ **Brittle:** There is little evidence of relationships between the different sectors. Where cross-sector relationships exist, they are often characterised by tension and conflict. The sectors are not working collaboratively to respond to local challenges or to address wider influences on the economy. The local economy is therefore very susceptible to economic and social shocks.

6.1.1 The resilience graph

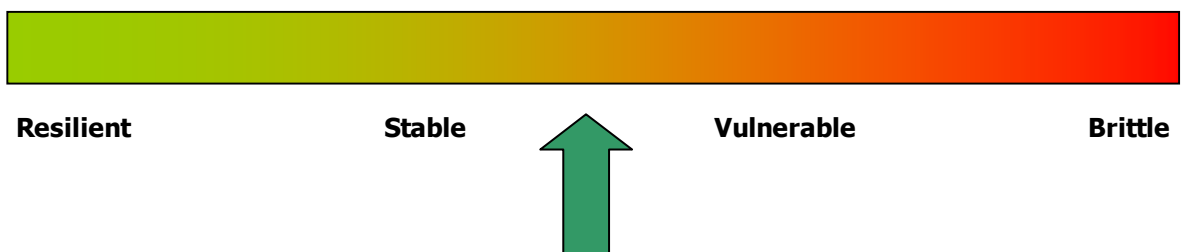
Figure 5: The strength of the relationships within the Ashfield and Mansfield sub region



The graph above pulls together the 10 measures (measures 4-13) from the resilience model that relate to relationships. As can be seen, none of the measures were ranked as brittle which is encouraging and suggests that foundations exist within the locality that can be used to foster stronger working relationships and therefore resilience.

The graph has been designed to provide a useful overview of the research findings but a further, more detailed breakdown for each individual measure can be found below.

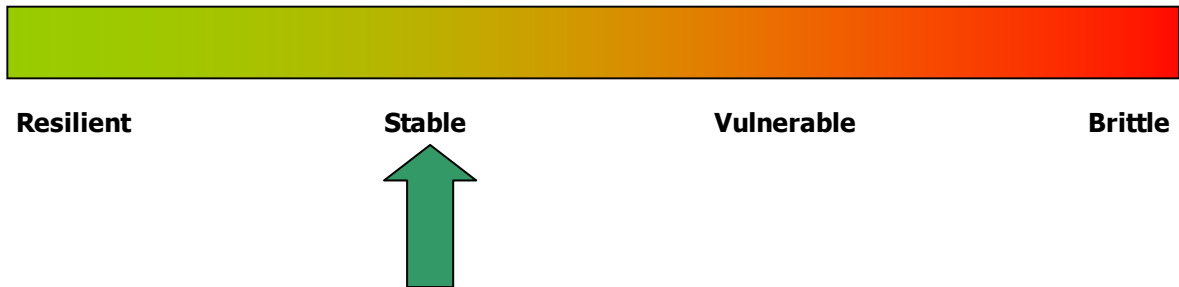
6.1.2 Measure 4 - The commercial economy’s relationship with the public sector



The research found that commercial sector’s relationship with the public sector would fall evenly between vulnerable and stable when considering the districts as one economy. Mansfield’s individual relationship can be considered stable. Mansfield’s businesses have Mansfield 2020, which acts as an effective business network and a conduit for interacting with the public sector. The private sector companies in the town centre have also worked successfully with the public sector to implement a Business Improvement District.

Ashfield’s relationship however would be considered vulnerable. The district does not have a successful business network resource like Mansfield 2020 and the Chamber of Commerce for the area has struggled to recruit members and therefore has little presence in the locality.

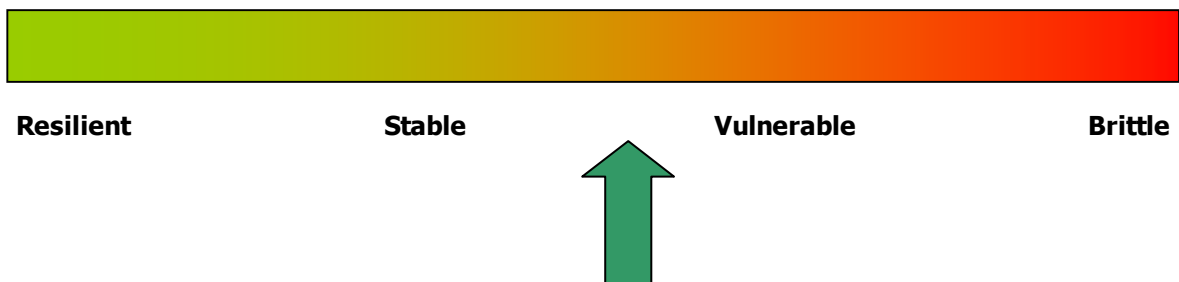
6.1.3 Measure 5 - The public economy’s relationship with the commercial sector



The relationship between the public and commercial sector is the most successful measure within the local economic territory. This relationship is certainly stable and both councils have demonstrated they recognise the need for effective private sector engagement and have worked to bring relevant private sector representatives onto the respective LSPs. Again there has been a differing level of success within the individual districts. The MASP has a more solid structure and attracts a greater level of participation from partners while Ashfield Partnership is seen to be struggling which has been recognised by Ashfield Council.

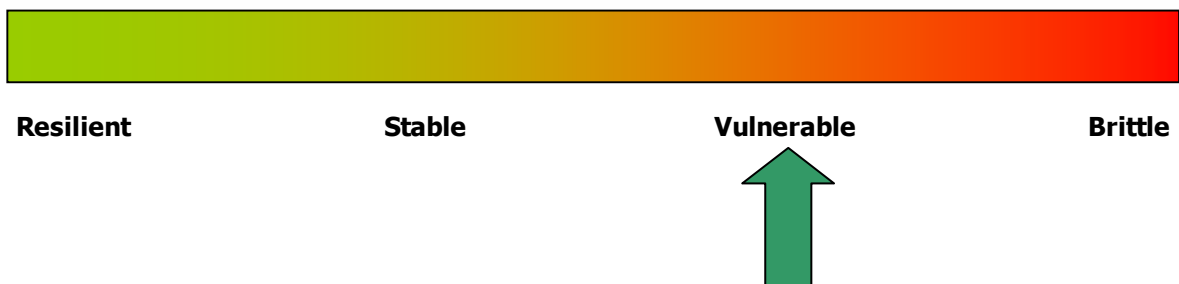
An additional point is that the LEGI programme has provided the sub region with one of the only real examples of a project working across the two districts that is managing to strengthen relationships.

6.1.4 Measure 6 – The public economy’s relationship with the social sector



Due to a number of different factors, the research concluded that the relationship between the public and social economies was closer to vulnerable than stable. The research did highlight examples of successful responses implemented by the public sector to support the social sector such as asset transfer and the dedicated LEGI project designed to stimulate social enterprises. However the research identified that the public sector was still unsure of how the social sector functioned and the different types of organisations and capacity that existed within it. The public sector had also failed to secure strategic representation on both LSPs. Where there was representation the social sector felt that the LSPs structure meant that it was dragged down into discussing local level issues rather than concentrating on creating strategic decisions and policy.

6.1.5 Measure 7 – The social economy’s relationship with the public sector



In each district, the social sector acknowledged that internal partnership working was fragmented and unorganised and this meant there was work to be done to improve relationships at the district level before they could think about working at a sub regional level.

The social sector recognised that this made it hard for other parts of the economy to interact and develop productive relationships and therefore the relationship has been deemed vulnerable. The relationship is not considered brittle as the research showed that the social sector recognised the potential benefits that could come from closer working ties with the public sector and understood that there is need to foster them as public sector cuts begin to be implemented.

6.1.6 Measure 8 – The commercial economy’s relationship with the social sector



Within Ashfield and Mansfield there is little interaction between the commercial and social sectors outside of members of the private sector sitting on various boards but this is very much down to personal preferences, therefore the relationship sits in the middle of vulnerable and brittle. There is a lack of understanding from the commercial sector about what the social sector does or could deliver and the benefits that could be derived from a more functioning relationship.

6.1.7 Measure 9 – The social economy’s relationship with the commercial sector



The relationship between the social and commercial sector is seen to slightly stronger than the commercial and social measure and therefore sits closer to vulnerable than brittle. While there again was little evidence of close working relationships, the social sector acknowledged the confusing nature of the sector may have hindered the development of more fruitful relationships. The reason this measure is seen to be stronger is that the social sector recognised there was potential for closer working ties to generate added value within the community which was not recognised by the commercial sector.

6.1.8 Summary – the resilience of relationships within the local economic territory

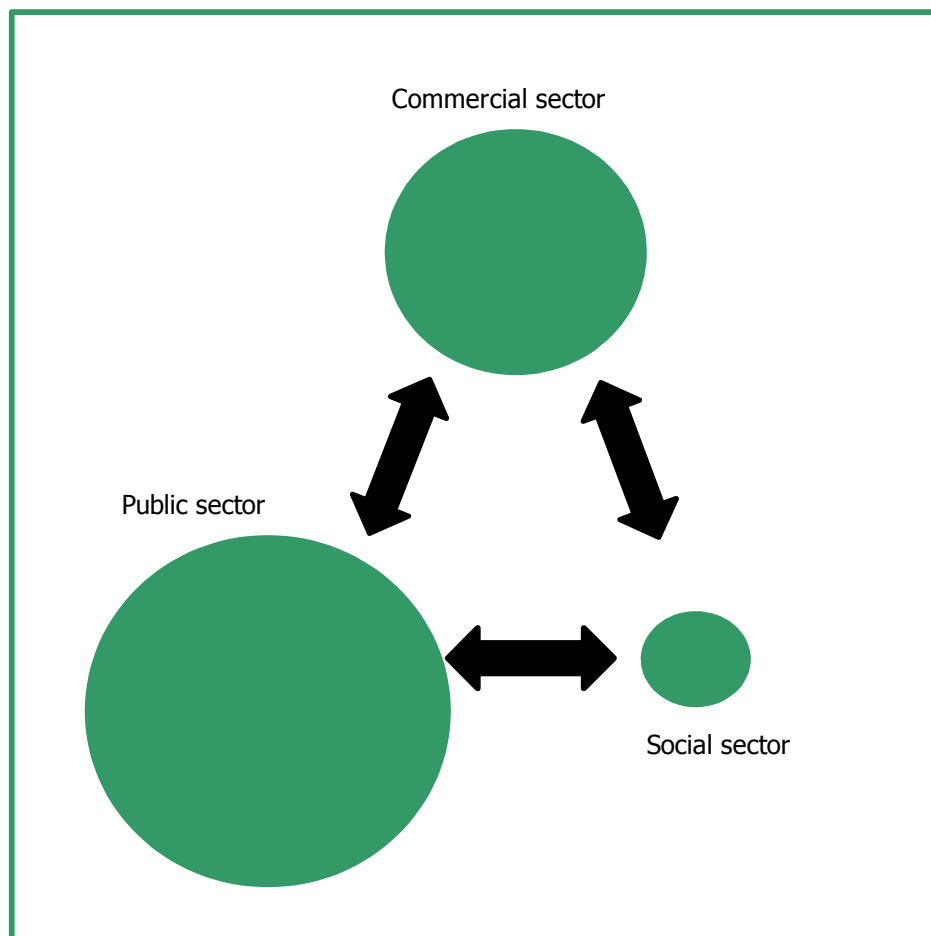
The box below summarises the resilience of the relationships between the three spheres of Ashfield and Mansfield’s combined economy: the public sector; the commercial sector; and the social sector. As the analysis demonstrates, despite the challenges, the public sector’s relationships with the commercial and social economies are amongst the most stable, with some showing signs of resilience. This suggests that the public sector (in particular, local authorities) is playing the strongest role in facilitating cross-sector relationships. In contrast, the relationship between the social and commercial sectors is clearly the most vulnerable and has the greatest room for improvement.



6.2 The influence of the commercial, public and social sectors in developing cross-sector relationships

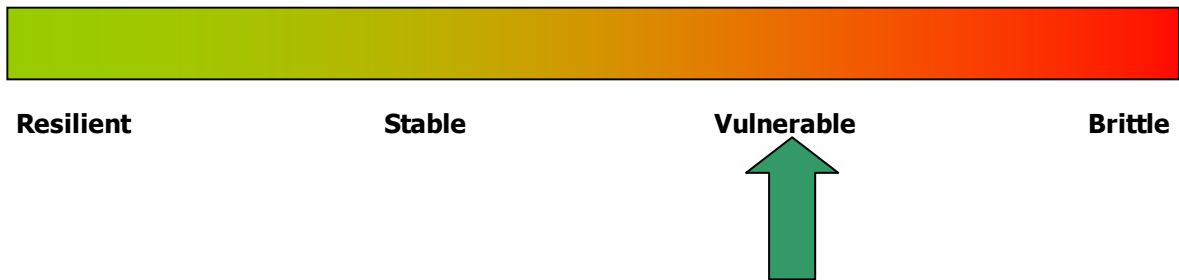
The diagram below considers the role that each of the three spheres of the economy play in influencing cross-sector relationships in Ashfield and Mansfield. In the box below we see that whilst the commercial economy is the largest sphere in terms of employment share (as highlighted earlier in this report), it is the public sphere that is playing the leading role in facilitating cross-sector relationships, as represented in the box below. The social sector has the smallest influence due to the lack of engagement with the two LSPs and the difficulty it has had in generating meaningful relationships with the other two parts of the economy.

Figure 6: Relative influence of each sphere within the economy



6.3 The impact of external factors on resilience

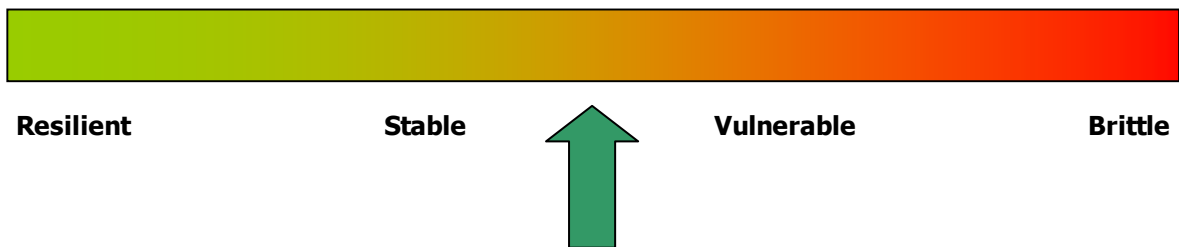
6.3.1 Measure 10 – Relationship between the local economic territory and the broad economic context



As a sub region, there is still work to be done to strengthen Ashfield and Mansfield’s role within the economy. Currently its relationship with the broad economic context could be described as vulnerable. The research found that the business base can be inward looking and introvert and while the economic development strategies in place recognised the potential threats and opportunities for the commercial sector at the regional and national level, the international market did not seem to be considered.

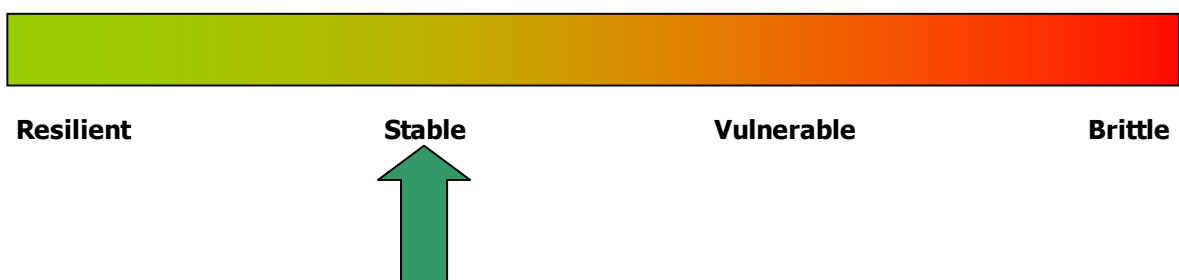
The prosperity gap model in measure 10 and the statistics in appendix one also identify a number of issues that are hindering the sub region’s economic progress. The prosperity gap model identified that the sub region was generating £500m less than it could be if it could raise its productivity levels up to the UK average. This meant that challenges the sub region faced around the lack of high level skills, low rates of innovation and R+D investment were having a considerable impact on the output of the local economy.

6.3.2 Measure 11 – Relationship between the local economic territory and working within environmental limits



Our research highlighted that there is awareness within the public sector of the importance of promoting economic development within environmental limits however there is more the two authorities could be doing in partnership on this subject therefore the relationship sits between stable and vulnerable. The relationship could easily be moved to a more stable setting and it will be interesting to see how the concept of sustainable development is integrated into the joint economic masterplan. In a similar fashion the relationship could become more vulnerable if the opportunities and threats provided by working within environmental limits are not acknowledged in the masterplan.

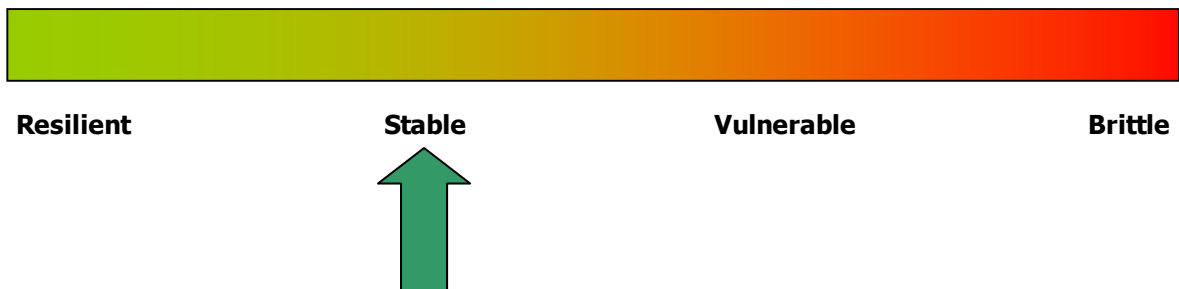
6.3.3 Measure 12 – Relationship between the local economic territory and local identity, history and context



The relationship between the local economic territory and local identity, history and context has been classed as stable. The history of the two districts has certainly played a role in shaping where the locality is now economically. As former coalfields, the area lost its *raison d'être* once the coal mining industry collapsed and has suffered from the aftershocks ever since through unemployment, long term sickness and poverty. Mansfield is the 34th most deprived Local Authority in England and Ashfield is 81st.

However, although the history of the place has left a legacy of big challenges for the districts, the setback suffered by the two districts has helped forge a stronger place identity among the businesses and residents. The partners involved in creating a stronger economy are aware of the history of place and the problems it left and are therefore able to recognise and identify the issues that need to be tackled. Although the history and context has been a hindrance to economic output, there is a strong, stable relationship between the former purpose of the place and the established place identity that exists.

6.3.4 Measure 13 – Relationship between the local economic territory and governance



The relationship between the local economic territory and governance is a difficult one for district councils as they often sit beneath a crowded governance landscape which can affect the locality’s ability to adapt and be flexible in tackling economic or environmental shocks. However this relationship can be described as stable as the research clearly identified good working relationships between the two districts and with the county council. As public sector cuts begin to be implemented there will be a need for the two districts to ensure they maintain a stable and positive relationship with the county otherwise there is a danger local projects could be moved to the county level to deliver greater economies of scale.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

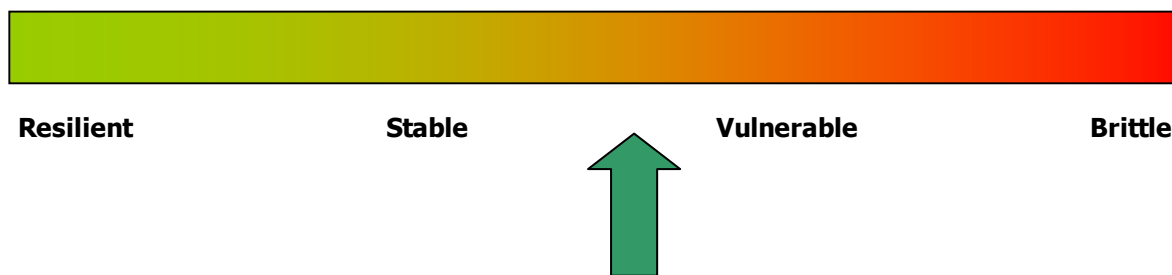
Our research in Ashfield and Mansfield highlighted a whole range of issues and challenges that are affecting the relationships between the three spheres and are having a subsequent impact on the local economy. This concluding section does not provide the answers as to how these challenges can be overcome, but in approaching local economic development from a different perspective, CLES are confident that the findings will encourage partners within Ashfield and Mansfield to think differently about how they work with others and how these relationships can be developed in the future.

This final section of the report does however make a number of recommendations for how Ashfield and Mansfield may consider addressing the challenges it faces. It is important to highlight that CLES’ understanding of economic resilience is an evolving model. From the series of pilot studies, we are constantly learning lessons about what works and what doesn’t in applying the model to local economies. This learning process will continue to influence how we develop and apply our ideas and in particular look at ways to synthesise the conclusions and recommendations we make across the pilot studies into a meaningful and practical assessment framework for economic resilience. CLES are keen to maintain communication with all pilot study contacts throughout this process and seek their involvement in developing the research findings into action.

7.1 Overview

The principal point for the resilience pilot project in Ashfield and Mansfield was to treat the two local districts as one functioning economic area, and examine and understand the relationships between the public, private and social sectors across the joined locality. However, to be able to understand the state of the relationships at the functional economic area, it was also important to explore how the individual components were functioning. If there are issues with a level of interaction at the more local level, this is likely to translate into an issue at the sub-regional level.

Looking at Ashfield and Mansfield as an individual entity, the research has shown that meaningful relationships across the two districts are still either in their infancy or non-existent outside of the public sector. The individual districts have different challenges with their internal relationships that will need to be rectified before more concrete connections across the combined local economic territory can take place. However the local authorities have a long history of collaboration and, coupled with the successful LEGI Programme, this provides a useful foundation upon which to create and improve the reciprocal private and social sector relationships. The joint economic masterplan is a positive step forward for the local authorities and will establish a policy that has been designed to recognise the importance of collaboration. A stronger recognised partnership across the local authorities could provide the catalyst needed to stimulate closer working relationships between the private and social sectors within the individual districts. Therefore the overall resilience of the sub region is closer to vulnerable but has the potential to move to stable once the process of integrating working relationships across the two districts through the economic masterplan begins to materialise.



As has been described, the resilience of a place can be judged by the strength of the relationships that are in place; strong relationships between the resources available to a locality lead to and create better responses. The section below identifies areas where the research has ascertained the relationships currently in place could be improved and provides recommendations for how the locality could achieve those changes.

7.2 Resources

Across the measures a number of different resources have been identified that have been created to stimulate relationships and networks. The LSPs provided the best opportunity for bringing together representatives from the public, private and social sector, but the research identified issues around how effective these bodies were. While MASP has a strong structure in place, there are issues around whether it was strategic enough, while the Ashfield Partnership has struggled to get high level representation from both the private and social sector.

Outside of the public sector, apart from Mansfield 2020, there is a real lack of influential umbrella bodies that the public sector can engage with. When looking at the private sector, some work has been taking place with the Federation of Small Businesses in Ashfield; however the Chamber of Commerce for the area concentrates more at the county level and does not have a strong presence in the locality. The social sector has even less representation and while there is an umbrella body for the CVS in each district, the social organisations admit that there are challenges around fragmentation which has led to difficulties in engaging the sector.

7.2.1 A new LSP to represent the new functional economic area

As the joint economic masterplan progresses, one of the options being explored is the possibility of creating a joint LSP to cover and serve both districts. The research suggests this would be a beneficial move for both districts as a properly resourced and appropriate structure would help to generate and promote more robust relationships across the district boundaries.

Ashfield Partnership is seen to be struggling, with poor representation from the private sector whereas MASP has a strong structure and has managed to bring representatives from the private and social sector together. Although the two organisations are facing different circumstances the research has shown they both suffer from a common issue. Representatives from both partnerships felt that neither organisation had the ability to really influence the development of strategy in the locality.

The organisational side of MASP is in place and provides the districts with a useful starting place to move forward and potentially reorganise the structure to integrate both district's representatives while creating a new strategic role to ensure private, social interaction.

Recommendation

Ashfield and Mansfield should work towards the creation of a joint LSP. The two Councils have a strong track record of working together on economic development activity and the successful LEGI bid with Bolsover is evidence of this. The public sector as a whole faces a shortfall in funding for the foreseeable future and this will impact both local authorities. Within this evolving economic environment the two authorities have understood the benefit of working together to create greater resilience but there is a need to ensure that all parts of the economy are involved with this process.

A joint LSP provides the two local authorities with an opportunity to reshape and redefine current structures to ensure the Board has a strategic focus which has the power to influence policy development and funding decisions. As the LEGI Board demonstrated, there is a need to provide partners outside the public sector with the opportunity to make decisions which have an impact on the locality. If they are solely used as a sounding board it is likely they will become disengaged. This stronger, more streamlined organisation could also potentially encourage strong private sector partners like Rolls Royce which are on the Ashfield LSP but do not attend meetings to become involved again with the local decision making process.

As has been mentioned throughout the research, Ashfield LSP is not seen to be as effective as Mansfield's. Therefore if a joint LSP is taken forward both districts will need to ensure that specific resources go into strengthening the engagement of Ashfield representatives to avoid the new structure being seen as too influenced by Mansfield organisations.

If a new LSP is deemed unfeasible then the possibility of merging specific sub groups, especially the economic development ones, should be explored as a first step in which to build stronger

working relationships across the two districts.

7.3 Relationships

Although the resilience research concentrated on understanding the state of the relationships between the private, public and social sectors, the information gathered suggests it would be worthwhile for Ashfield and Mansfield to understand how efficient the links were within each individual sphere. Without functioning umbrella bodies that can bring together a range of different organisations to speak with one voice, the relationships that exist become fragmented. Effective membership bodies encourage internal networking between organisations within a similar sphere but also provide an opportunity to work together and across sectors through efficient leadership.

7.3.1 Supporting the private sector

The two districts are in very different positions when examining the presence of successful business networks that can provide representation to other parts of the economy when needed. As explored in Measures 4 and 5, Mansfield has the effective business network body, Mansfield 2020, which understands the need to engage with the public sector. On top of this there is also a separate Mansfield Chamber which also operates in the area. The relationships that flow through the private sector in Mansfield have been strengthened due to the presence of these business networks. An example of positive joint working can be taken from the successful BID project which required businesses to vote on whether they were willing to contribute extra resources to improving the locality. Businesses in the area have worked together and understand the potential impact of collaborating, resulting in Mansfield Town Centre benefiting from £1.25 million additional investment over the next five years.

These networks do not seem to exist in Ashfield. While the structure of the business base is not ideal, in terms of the size and capacity of indigenous companies, having access to a functioning local business network is important. It provides companies with a route to market and a way to reach decision makers who might otherwise be very difficult to engage with using conventional advertising methods. Another issue that has impacted the private sector is the shift of Business Link contracts to the regional level which has made it hard for local businesses to engage with emerging support mechanisms.

Where other localities can count on a Chamber of Commerce to provide a resource to implement a successful business network, the scale of the county level Chamber has meant there is very little engagement at the local level. The regional Chamber has struggled to stimulate membership from either district and the research suggests this could be because the present business base in the districts is inward looking and not willing to engage with structures and opportunities outside of the locality.

Recommendation

Mansfield's private sector has managed to come together in an organised and effective manner. Organisations like Mansfield 2020 and the new emerging BID provide the networks businesses need to flourish and increase productivity. The private sector in Ashfield has struggled to bring itself together to simulate the success seen in its neighbouring district.

As the districts start to form a more cohesive economic territory, it would make sense for both local authorities to work with Mansfield 2020 to look at expanding its remit into Ashfield. The structure and best practice is already in place and the organisation can use its expertise and experience to expand into Ashfield. This should be done in conjunction with Ashfield District Council which could look to provide resources to the organisation in a similar vein as Mansfield District Council. This would also provide Ashfield with a port of call for when it needs to engage with the private sector in its area.

7.3.2 Structuring and supporting the social economy

Both districts are facing a similar situation with the social sectors in their localities. As described in Measure 7, the social sectors in each district appear to be fragmented and lack leadership. There is

no strategic level representation on either LSP and representatives within the sector acknowledge that it is a difficult task for external bodies to engage with.

Efforts have been made by the public sector to try and support the social side of the economy. Initiatives such as the LEGI Programme and the successful examples of asset transfer, especially in Ashfield, have all helped develop the sector financially but there has been no assistance in helping them organise themselves to gain strategic level input from the sector.

Having a more conventional structure could potentially help to develop a relationship between the private and social sectors which is nearly non-existent at the moment. There cannot be progress on this relationship until the social sector has sorted out its organisational issues and has a clear and strong message about the role and services it could provide.

There is certainly untapped potential for stronger working partnerships. Use of infrastructure, volunteering opportunities, and the talent pool within the CVS sector are all additional benefits the private sector could access if appropriate networks were in place.

Recommendation

The social sector in both districts need assistance; as there are no clear relationships at the local level this has meant the cross boundary working has been missing. There is an opportunity for the local authorities to act as facilitators and a conduit to help the social sector become more organised and potentially assist in creating an umbrella body that could represent the whole sector at the strategic level.

What would benefit both the social and public sectors would be to understand the scale of the sector in both Ashfield and Mansfield. At present, there is no infrastructure in place for this to be led by the social sector, but there is an opportunity to work in partnership. The public sector could assist this process by adapting one of the current projects taking place across the two local authorities. The LEGI Programme has a project strand dedicated to helping create social enterprises within the locality. The funds available for this work stream have not been actively taken up and it may be more beneficial to the locality to divert some funds from this programme to undertake a comprehensive mapping exercise of the social sector. Having a greater understanding of the types of organisation and the levels of duplication across both Ashfield and Mansfield would have a range of benefits:

- it would allow the social sector, as well as public sector bodies, to understand what services are available as well as the level of existing capacity. It would also provide social enterprises with the information they may need to look at potential mergers to consolidate and strengthen as well as reduce duplication. This type of project could help to build a level of trust between the two parts of the economy which in turn would help create stronger relationships and therefore an increased level of resilience;
- it would provide the backbone needed to understand the structure of the social sector and the strengths it has. The information could be used to develop a 'fit for purpose' umbrella body which could be organised to represent the particular strengths within the locality and would have the information present to make a link into the differing organisations. Having this type of resource would not only help develop the internal structures within the social spheres but also help develop and build up the public/social relationship.

7.3.3 Integrating the principle of Total Place

The resilience pilot has shown there is a strong working relationship between the two local authorities but also that relationships with other public sector bodies could be improved. It is important for a local economy that collaboration exists not only between the three sectors but also within each individual sector as well.

In Ashfield and Mansfield, the various public sector agencies are involved with the LSPs but this forum is seen more as a useful avenue for finding out what each part of the public sector is doing rather than having the ability and leadership to bend partner resources to ensure the challenges in the locality are tackled in partnership. As one interviewee commented:

'Getting other public sector bodies to be involved in action plans is difficult. Trying to get them to sign up to actions in the LSP Economic Development Sub-Group is challenging.'

One of the key reasons for the implementation of a joint economic masterplan is to achieve greater value for money by allowing closer collaboration in the future on appropriate cross border projects; however there is a need to take this further and ensure that all parts of the public economy are integrated into this process.

Recommendation

There is an opportunity for Ashfield and Mansfield Councils to utilise their existing relationship to work with public sector partners to integrate the principle of Total Place within public sector thinking. Being able to understand the state of the delivery landscape will help identify opportunities for closer working relationships across the two districts. Once the information has been gathered, different public sector agencies can work together to conflate similar projects into more appropriate schemes (e.g. the research identified an overlap/duplication on economic development at county/district level which leads to a lack of clarity over who is leading on projects). Getting a better idea of the environment will have the benefit of stimulating closer collaboration while also potentially providing savings to counter the public sector funding cuts. This joined up approach to delivery also makes it easier for the private and social sectors to engage and cooperate with the public sector by bringing bodies together in one place.

This will also help to change the way the local authorities work to encourage and convince partners to be involved with economic development action plans. Economic development is a cross cutting agenda and working together to meet various bodies' needs through a more innovative and joined up process will benefit all parties.

7.3.4 Be realistic about what the area can achieve and work together to get there

The imminent cutting of public sector spending to counter the debt built up during the recession will mean local government will be faced with some difficult funding decisions in the near future. Health and education have already been protected from these cuts therefore it is likely that other areas such as economic development and regeneration will be hit harder than expected. Ashfield and Mansfield are already exploring the possibility of shared services across both councils which, in some respects, will strengthen the relationship within the local economic territory; however this will also have an impact on existing capacity.

Recommendation

As the joint economic masterplan is developed there is a need for the Councils and partners to determine the key three or four strategic priorities for the locality in the future and concentrate on these rather than spreading themselves too thinly. The research has identified there are areas where relationships could be improved. If these can be rectified, then the future direction of the joint economic masterplan should concentrate on understanding the strategic projects the private and social sectors are also eager to inject resources and capacity into. Engaging the partners this way, so that they can see a tangible change in issues that have hindered them in the past, will only work to strengthen the relationships that exist. Working towards common, clear and tangible goals will help create effective cross sector relationships.

7.3.5 Challenges of being part of the two tier governance structure

As District Councils, Ashfield and Mansfield are somewhat constrained by the levels of governance that sit above them. There is less room to manoeuvre and shape their own destiny when there are county, regional and national policies to align and adhere to. As the research has shown, Ashfield and Mansfield sit under a plethora of governance structures and as District Councils it will be hard for them to influence policy when needed.

At present, the relationship between the two districts and the county work well enough, with both sides admitting it can often be 'up or down'; however areas with two tier government will be faced with tough spending decisions. Nottinghamshire County Council has already announced an £80 million spend reduction over three years and this will have an impact at the local level for Ashfield

and Mansfield. This may involve taking local initiatives up to the county level to achieve savings through greater economies of scale which may leave the two districts with even less resources. This will make the need to cooperate and concentrate on shared priorities even more important.

Recommendation

While there are currently positive relationships between the county and the two districts, the two tier governance structure will always raise inevitable challenges. The districts will need to ensure Nottinghamshire County Council understand the potential of the combined local economic territory and that local initiatives are the most appropriate way of tackling a locality's issues; therefore there is a need to continue to build and strengthen the relationship that currently exists. The three organisations need to work together to develop a mature approach which will be able to overcome the challenges faced from public sector spending cuts.

7.4 Responses

The majority of successful responses that were identified are either run or facilitated by the public sector. The LEGI Programme, the BID project in Mansfield, asset transfers to the social sector, the i-centre, the Mansfield/Ashfield regeneration route and the proposed LABVs are all examples of public sector initiatives that have been developed to stimulate or support either the private or social sector in some way. When the public sector was not involved, the research failed to uncover many successful examples of private/social collaboration. This is not to say there are no projects that have been developed between these two sectors, but that they may be more informal and driven by individuals rather than strategy.

The resources section demonstrates the real importance of the public sector in Ashfield and Mansfield to the local economy, and there is a clear role for public sector organisations within the area. It would be beneficial for the public sector to use the experience it has developed in implementing these resources and act as a facilitator, encouraging similar successful projects between the private and social sectors.

Recommendation

The research identifies clear examples of both the District and County Councils coming together to implement a series of resources designed to help stimulate or support both the private and social sectors.

The majority of all projects taking place have public sector support at the centre. The research identified a number of challenges for the current relationships at the local level; without the public sector stimulus, the local economic territory may have been in a more precarious position.

There is a need for the developing joint economic masterplan to acknowledge the importance of the public sector to economic development within the locality. The experience that exists within the public sector can be utilised to help facilitate additional projects that are led by either the private or social sector. This will enable greater participation from the other parts of the economy and therefore a more integrated economy.

APPENDIX 1

Secondary data analysis

DATA ANALYSIS

The following section outlines the overarching labour supply conditions within the Ashfield and Mansfield economy followed by an outline of the demand side factors through an assessment of the economic base and sectoral mix. The labour market analysis is important in understanding the cross cutting issues which are prevalent throughout the report, and the sector analysis helps to understand the make up of the economy required for Measures 1-3.

The local economic territory

One of the main components of the resilience model is understanding how the private, public and social economies are structured. Manipulating available government labour market data sources allows the research to produce a practical review of how the labour market is structured in terms of the private and public sector, and the relative influence of each of these. The resilience report is studying the resilience of Ashfield and Mansfield as one functioning economic unit therefore the economic data has been combined.

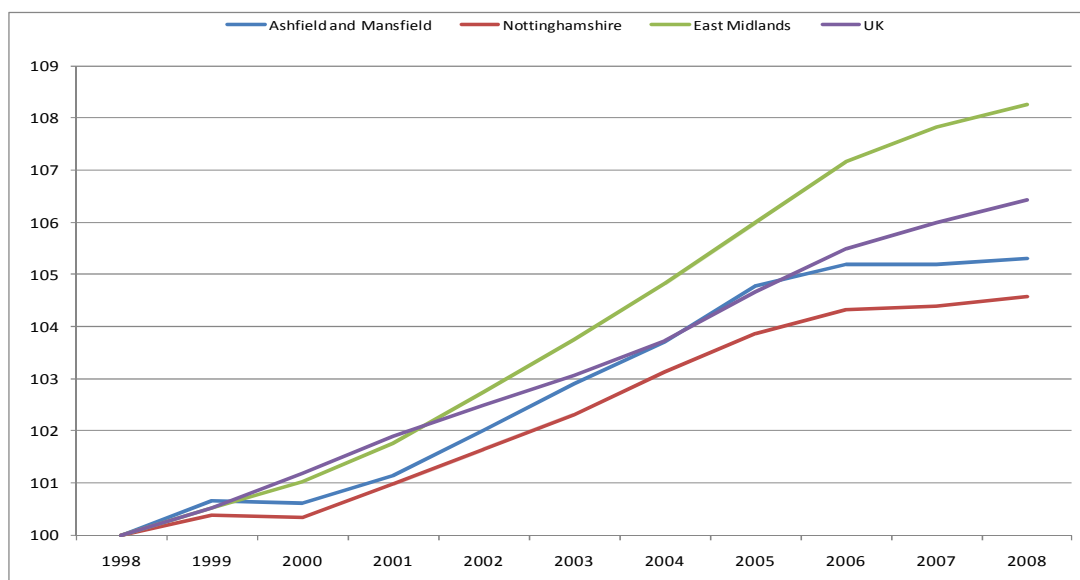
As acknowledged before the resilience project started, measuring the social economy is a difficult task. At best, national statistics provide an idea of how much this part of the economy contributes at a national level, but it is difficult to find data that drills down to the local level.

The national survey of third sector organisations³⁸ is a useful tool but this is only available for county and upper tier authorities, and only provides a cross sectional view of this section of the economy; however where we undertook interviews with the social sector, we aimed to draw information on the size of the sector where possible.

Workforce and public and private sector employment

The growth of an area's working age population is an important indicator as to both its economic performance and future potential. Figure 5 shows relative growth of the working age population since 1998. The Nottingham area, including Ashfield and Mansfield, has experienced sustained growth up to 2006 before falling away. This is in contrast to the wider regional level of growth which has been consistently strong. Continued lack of growth of the working age population could have consequences for economic prosperity and productivity, with a smaller labour pool to meet the demand for potential jobs.

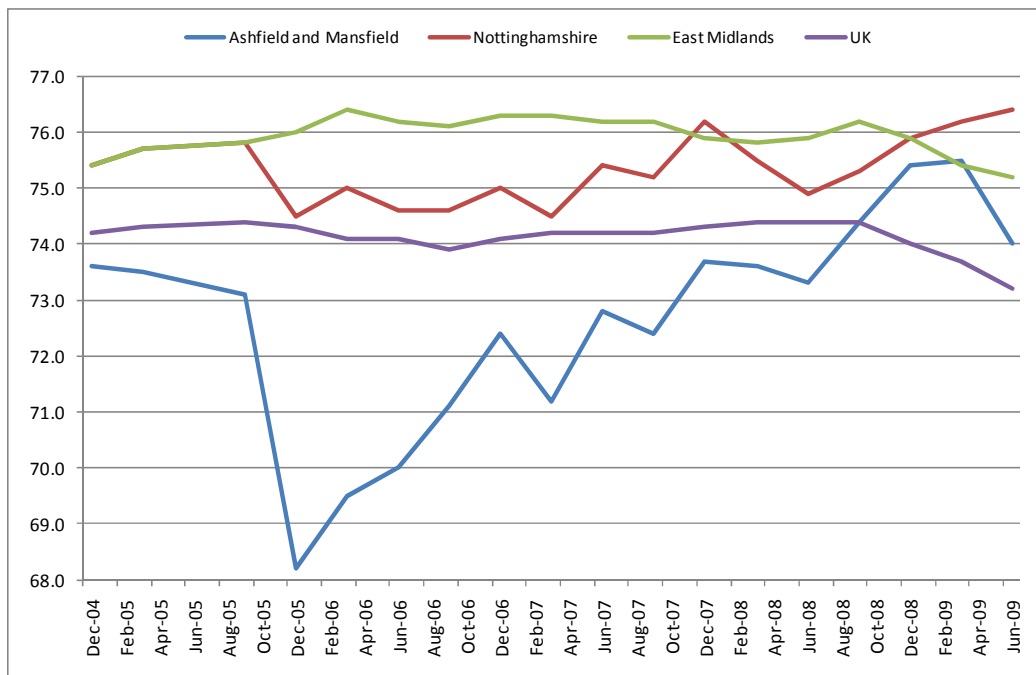
Figure 7: Growth of the working age population: Index: 2001=100, 2001-2008



The employment rate demonstrates the percentage of people working within the private, public and social sectors in Ashfield and Mansfield. The employment rate within Ashfield and Mansfield is relatively high (74.0%), higher than the UK average, although lower than the sub-regional and regional levels. The rate has recovered from a significant fall at the end of 2005, and until the recent economic downturn, has been increasing consistently over recent years. At its peak in the spring of 2009, the rate peaked at 75.5% from a low of 68.2% in December 2005.

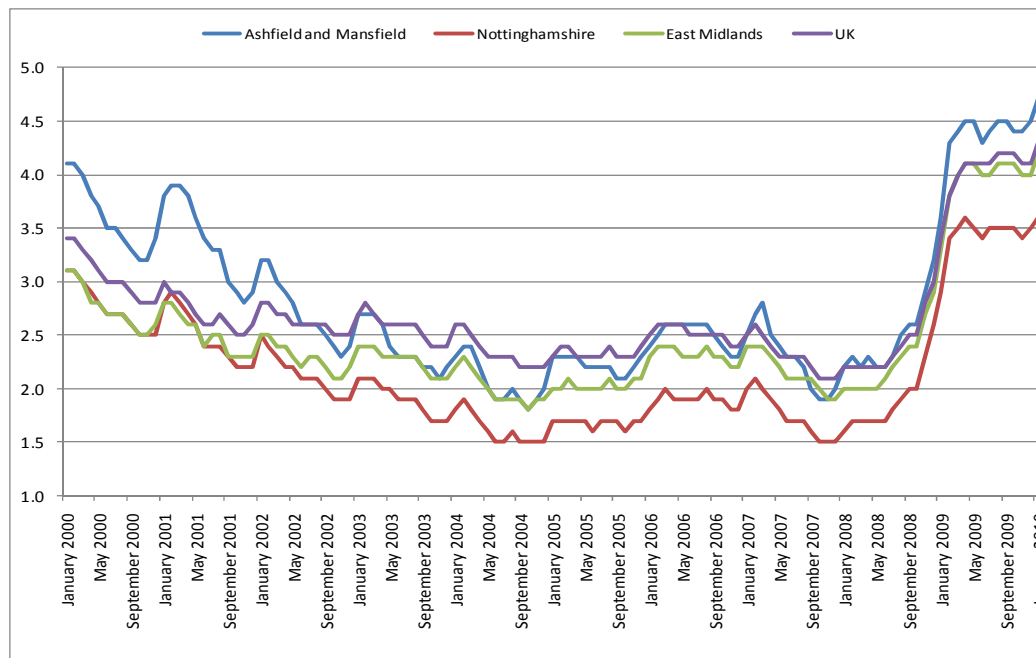
³⁸ Cabinet Office – Office for the Third Sector <http://www.nstso.com/analysis/surveyresults/>

Figure 8: Employment rate as a percentage of the working age population, December 2004 to June 2009



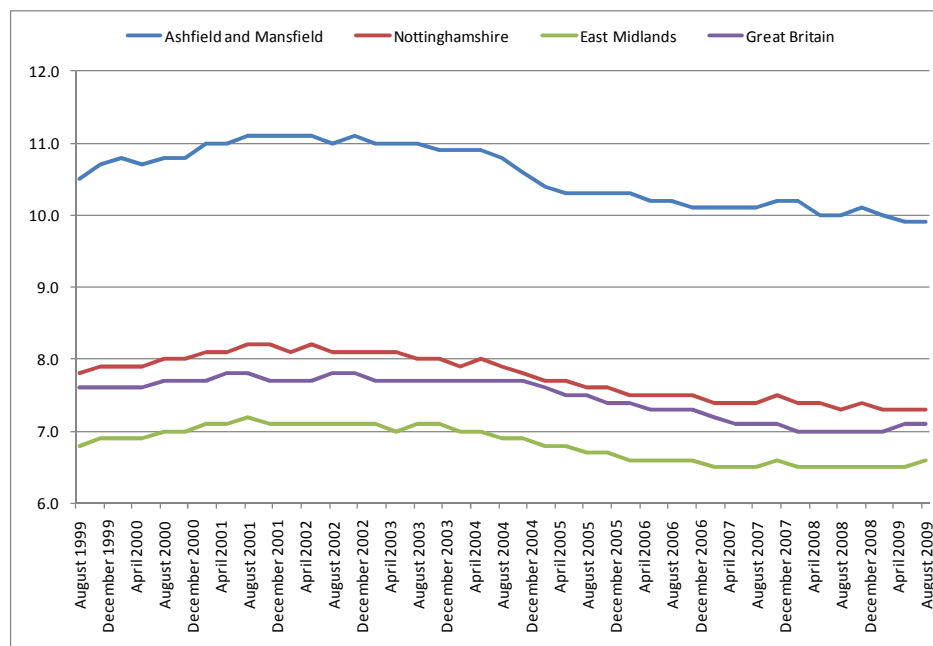
The impact of the recession upon the locality’s labour market across the three sectors has been notable, as illustrated in Figure 6, showing that Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimant rates have increased markedly through the recession, especially compared to the Nottinghamshire average (4.7% compared to 3.6% in January 2010).

Figure 9: Jobseekers Allowance rates as a percentage of the working age population, January 2000 to January 2009



Ashfield and Mansfield also suffer from a high level of Incapacity Benefit/Employment Support Allowance claimants. With rates of around 10% this provides a problem for the local economy, in that it is limiting the workforce available to local companies. With rates over 3% higher than the regional figures this would suggest there should be a larger social sector involved in the area as these companies often work within the health and well-being arena.

Figure 10: Incapacity Benefit/Employment Support Allowance rates as a percentage of the working age population, August 1999 to August 2009



Private and public sectors exam examined

Table 4 determines the relative scale of employment within the private and public sector. Total public sector employment has grown by almost a third (31.9%) over the last decade, significantly higher than the sub-regional, regional and national rates. A key issue therefore for Ashfield and Mansfield over the coming years will be how its high employment rates are affected by cuts in public spending in a local economy that is becoming increasingly reliant upon public sector employment, and how practitioners plan to overcome this through encouraging further diversity within the industrial base. Private sector growth (3.5%), in line with the regional picture (3.0%), has been sluggish, especially when compared with the Nottinghamshire average (11%), suggesting Ashfield and Mansfield is dislocated from the more buoyant sub-regional economy.

Table 4: Public and private sector percentage of employment

	Ashfield and Mansfield		Nottinghamshire		East Midlands		Great Britain	
	% of employment	% change 1998-2008	% of employment	% change 1998-2008	% of employment	% change 1998-2008	% of employment	% change 1998-2008
Private sector	71.7	3.5	72.6	11.0	73.2	3.0	73.1	4.6
Public sector	28.2	31.9	27.3	14.7	26.6	24.2	27.0	25.4

As we look closer at the data, it is not possible to precisely split private and public sector employment using current national statistics therefore as a proxy we classify the following sectors as public sector:

- public administration and defence, compulsory social security;
- education;
- health and social work.

Using current SIC classification codes, it is not possible to assess the size of the social economy. Instead, the project has used qualitative intelligence from those within Ashfield and Mansfield's social sector to understand its relative importance within the wider economy.

There is a reasonably diverse industrial base in Ashfield and Mansfield, with significant employment in manufacturing (15.9%) in line with the sub-regional and regional averages (although a notably higher proportion than both of these). Similarly, wholesale and retail (18.4%) and health (15.2%) have proportions of employment significantly higher than comparators, compared with business services (12.4%), a smaller employer than sub-regionally, regionally and nationally. Much of this activity is lower value, reflected in the labour market data (low workplace earnings and occupational profile in particular), and more reliant on public sector employment in terms of health and social work activities.

Figure 11: Employees in Ashfield and Mansfield as a percentage of total, 2008

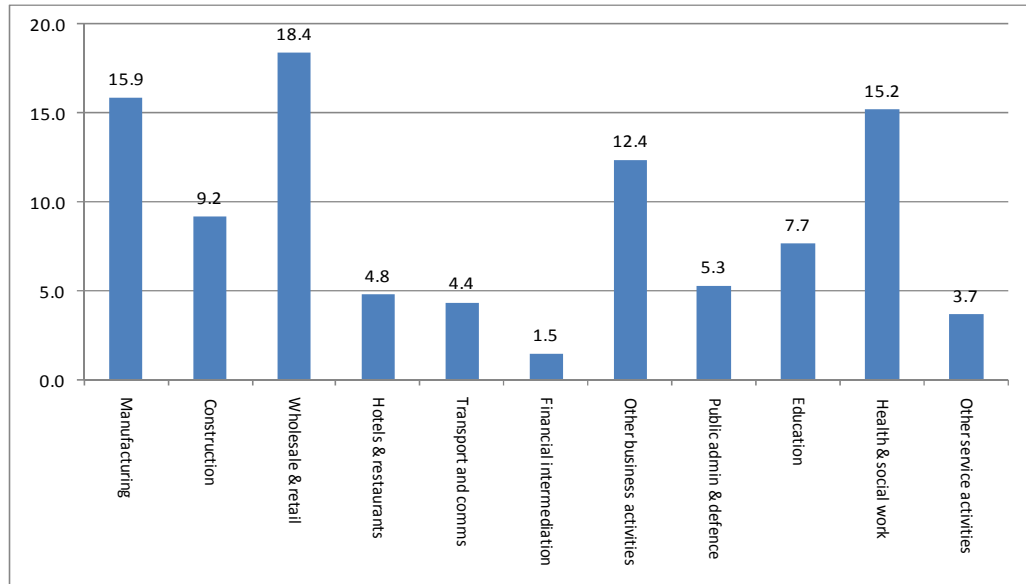
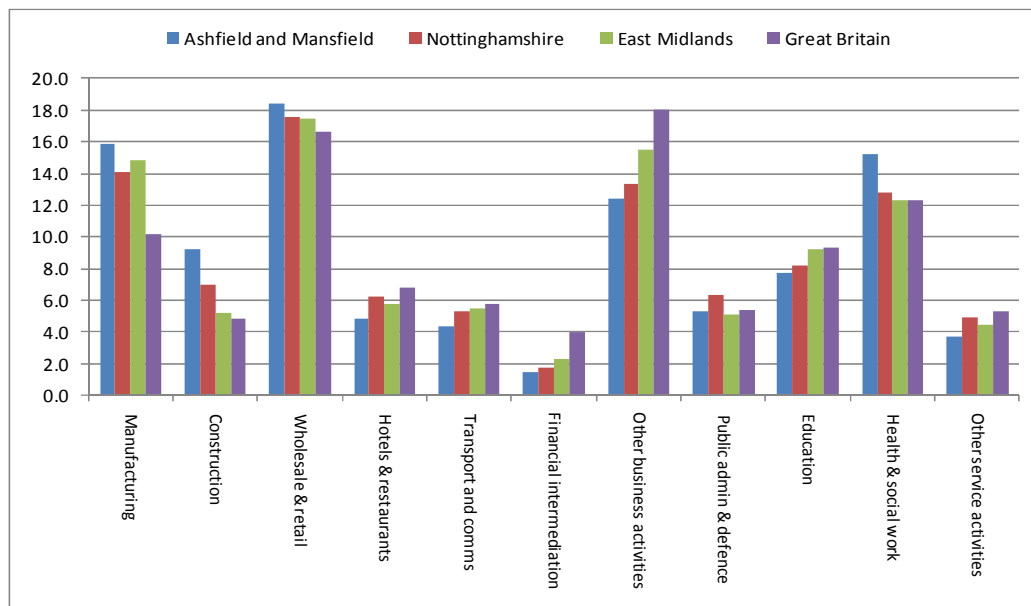
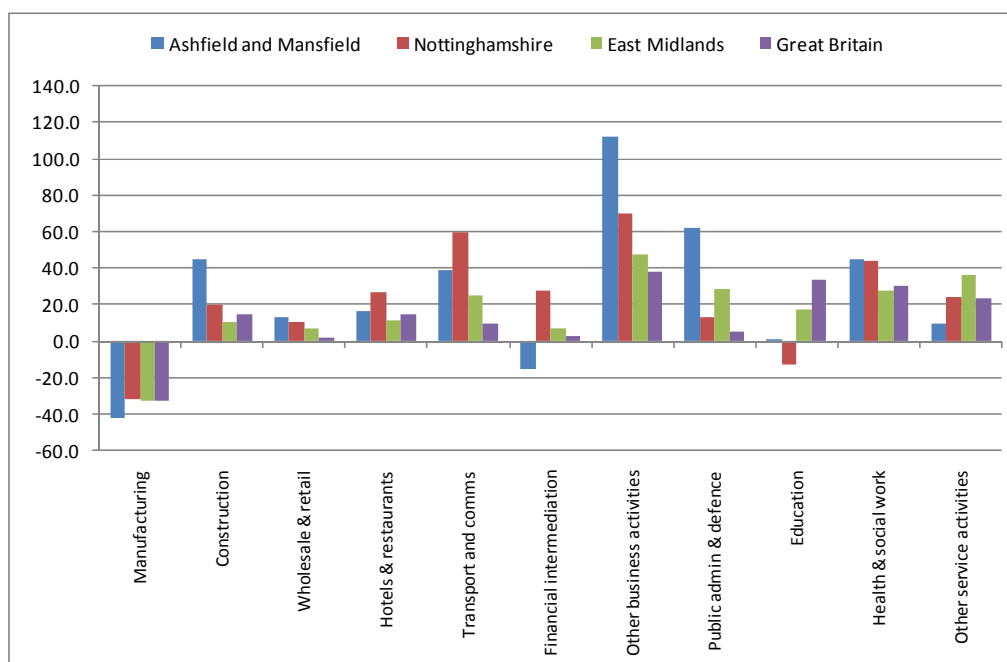


Figure 12: Employees as a percentage of total, 2008



Despite the lower than average employment within business services, this is the sector which has experienced the most growth over the last decade, expanding at a rate much higher than comparators and over doubling in size (albeit from a much lower base). With the fall in manufacturing employment, this represents significant restructuring of the economy with services becoming increasingly important. The other most notable rises in employment have been within public administration activities and construction, growing at rates significantly above the national and regional averages, and in the case of construction, an important sector to the area accounting for nearly a tenth of total employment. However, this growth is likely to be curtailed over the next decade due to the economic slowdown, resulting in less demand for construction activities and public spending cuts which may impact council and possible frontline activities.

Figure 13: Percentage change in employees by broad sector, 1998-2008

Private sector niches

Figure 12 highlights a number of sector niches within Ashfield and Mansfield. Immediately apparent are the number of niches within manufacturing, reflecting the high levels of employment within this sector. Some of these are high value (e.g. manufacture of aircraft and spacecraft (Rolls Royce) and manufacture of medical equipment), although the majority of it is lower value (e.g. textiles, manufacture of metal, plastic products). However, there are a number of key potential opportunities within advanced engineering/manufacturing should the manufacturing firms move up the value chain, with the sector's cross over with the agenda of low carbon growth in particular.

Other key niches within Ashfield and Mansfield surround its construction industry, including building installation, completion and civil engineering, each significant employer's in their own right. Despite the downturn and threat to construction and related jobs, there may be significant opportunities within the sector as the shift to low carbon growth results in increased demand for retrofitting, insulation and upgrading of existing commercial, retail and industrial buildings.

Other niches include printing services and wholesale of household goods – industries such as wholesale may be under threat as consumption decreases in the wake of the recession and if in the long term Ashfield and Mansfield experiences job losses, particularly within its large manufacturing sectors, together with public sector employment.

Table 5: 3 Digit SIC code where Location Quotient is above 1.5 (Great Britain=1.0)

3 Digit SIC Classification with a Location Quotient over 1.5	Number	Location Quotient
172 : Textile weaving	241	11.32
173 : Finishing of textiles	218	10.52
177 : Manufacture of knitted and crocheted articles	168	9.90
287 : Manufacture of other fabricated metal products	1,510	8.28
242 : Manufacture of pesticides and other agro-chemical products	75	7.79
182 : Manufacture of other wearing apparel and accessories	457	5.74
353 : Manufacture of aircraft and spacecraft	1,728	5.31
205 : Manufacture of other products of wood; manufacture of articles of cork, straw and plaiting materials	132	5.08
312 : Manufacture of electricity distribution and control apparatus	414	4.39
252 : Manufacture of plastic products	1,877	4.09
401 : Production and distribution of electricity	745	3.85
222 : Printing and services activities related to printing	1,245	3.02
331 : Manufacture of medical and surgical equipment and orthopaedic appliances	315	2.92
203 : Manufacture of builders carpentry and joinery	293	2.26
601 : Transport via railways	375	2.20
323 : Manufacture of television and radio receivers, sound or video recording or reproducing apparatus and associated goods	89	2.18
453 : Building installation	2,588	2.16
514 : Wholesale of household goods	1,849	2.16
753 : Compulsory social security activities	434	2.09
241 : Manufacture of basic chemicals	265	2.06
266 : Manufacture of articles of concrete, plaster and cement	175	1.97
261 : Manufacture of glass and glass products	145	1.96
454 : Building completion	1,298	1.90
286 : Manufacture of cutlery, tools and general hardware	146	1.89
452 : Building of complete construction or parts thereof, civil engineering	3,868	1.89
726 : Other computer related activities	526	1.83
294 : Manufacture of machine tools	75	1.82
503 : Sale of motor vehicle parts and accessories	574	1.82
281 : Manufacture of structural metal products	416	1.67
285 : Treatment and coating of metals; general mechanical engineering	624	1.67
361 : Manufacture of furniture	457	1.59
174 : Manufacture of made-up textile articles, except apparel	108	1.52

Knowledge intensive employment

The knowledge economy is vital for the future of Ashfield and Mansfield and the wider Nottinghamshire area. To better understand its current performance, a good guide is the percentage of employment in Knowledge Based Industries (KBIs). There is no perfect definition of KBIs using national statistics; however Table 5 outlines employment in sectors which typically have 50% or more of the workforce with NVQ Level 4 qualifications.

The business base within Ashfield and Mansfield generally consists of lower value activity, as highlighted in the reliance upon lower wage manufacturing, wholesale/retail and increasing growth of public sector employment – employment within KBIs is lower within Ashfield and Mansfield when compared to the national average, although reflects a lower propensity of knowledge jobs within the East Midlands. The growth in knowledge intensive jobs in recent years has been relatively low; however when compared to the sub-regional and regional average, at a level comparable with national growth.

Not all places will be knowledge centres and there is a need to ensure that districts understand the role of their place within the wider economy; however the lack of high value jobs (not just for Ashfield and Mansfield but also the wider region) raises questions about the future and possible increasing divergences with the wider UK pattern.

Table 6: Total employees in knowledge based industries, percentage of total employees and percentage change, 2003 to 2008

	KBI employees (2008)	KBI employees as % of total	% change 2003-2008
Ashfield and Mansfield	13,918	16.3%	4.4%
Nottinghamshire	39,395	14.0%	8.8%
East Midlands	317,432	16.8%	6.0%
UK	5,828,877	21.8%	4.5%

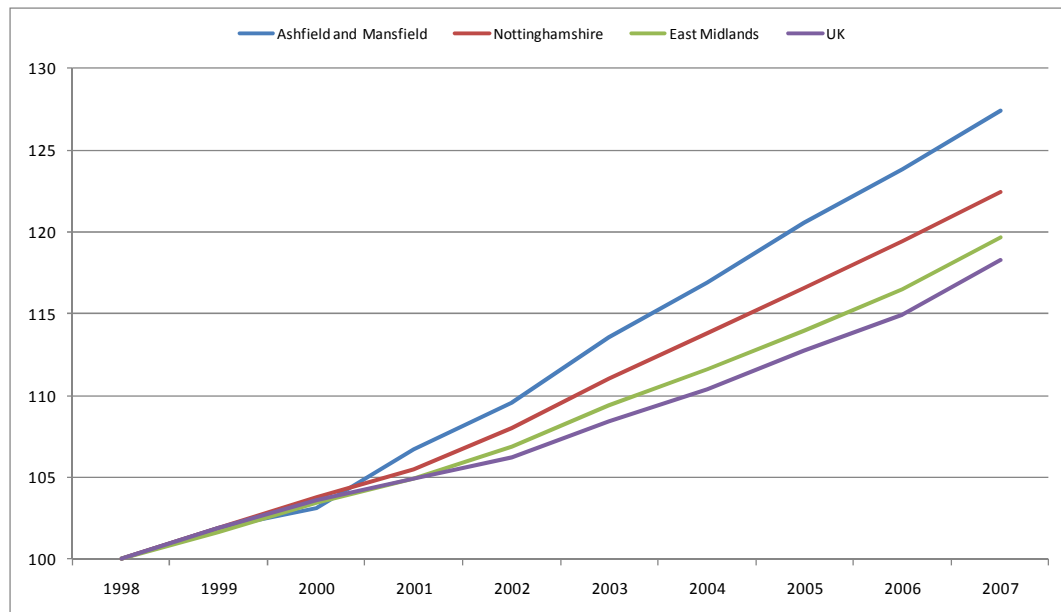
Enterprise

Business start-up levels are a good indicator of future economic growth. Studies show that 23% of new businesses create 71% of new employment, with businesses in high tech sectors often having the greatest capacity for job creation. In addition to the direct employment they bring, new businesses also help foster innovation and can have a beneficial effect through enhancing competition, helping improve efficiency.

The number of VAT registrations in relation to the adult population is one way of measuring business start-ups, although it is important to note that not all businesses are VAT registered and the smallest businesses might be missed. The data from Table 6 shows that entrepreneurialism within Ashfield and Mansfield is limited, with VAT registrations per 10,000 working age population lower than the comparators, although Figure 13 shows that paradoxically relative growth in business stock has been at a level higher than the county, regional and national levels. However, it is notable that VAT de-registrations are lower than the comparator levels – this suggests that the sectors where start-ups are prevalent have less risk involved, and are generally less knowledge intensive than in other parts of the county and region. This is reflected within the lower levels of knowledge intensive employment.

Table 7: VAT registrations and de-registrations per 10,000 working age population

	VAT registrations per 10,000 working age population	VAT de-registrations per 10,000 working age population
Ashfield and Mansfield	33.4	23.6
Nottinghamshire	42.4	31.3
East Midlands	48.4	34.8
UK	54.5	39.0

Figure 14: Stock of VAT registered businesses: Index 1998=100, 1998 to 2007

Lack of qualifications³⁹ affects types of jobs available within the economy

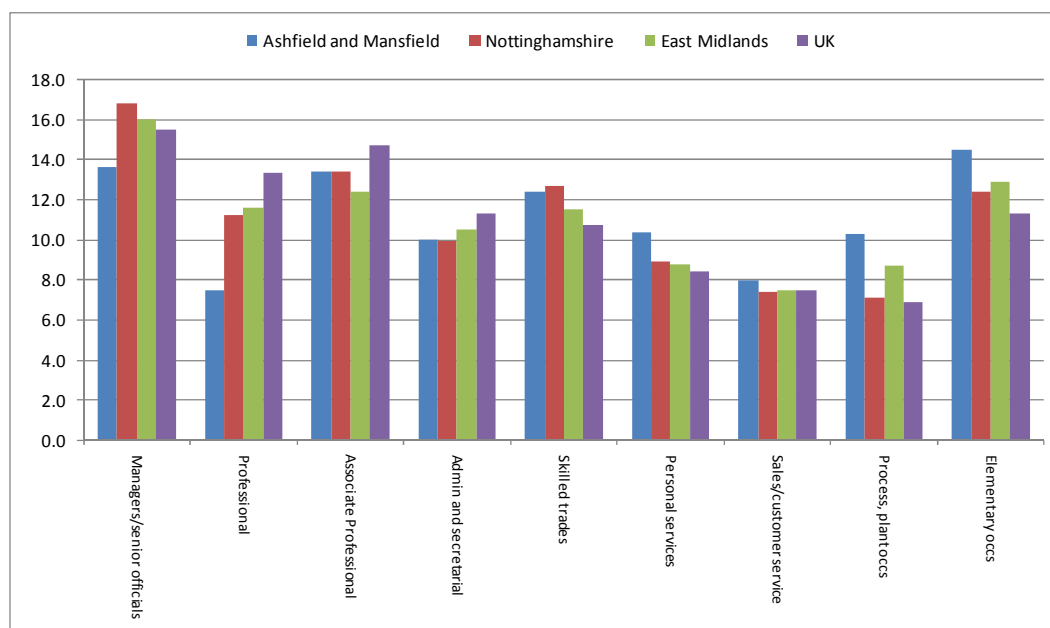
In terms of labour market performance and skills, there is a significant positive correlation between high level graduate skills and the proportion of the workforce within knowledge industries. Table 7 shows that Ashfield and Mansfield residents have a low level of high skill levels (17.6% qualified to Level 4+ and only a third of all residents containing at least a Level 3+), considerably lower than both Nottinghamshire and the East Midlands' levels which could have an impact on the private sector within the area.

Table 8: Qualifications by NVQ Level for the working age population, 2008

	NVQ L4+	NVQ L3+	NVQ L2+	NVQ L1+	No quals
Ashfield and Mansfield	17.6%	34.9%	55.7%	76.5%	15.6%
Nottinghamshire	27.2%	45.7%	64.3%	80.9%	12.2%
East Midlands	25.4%	43.5%	62.4%	78.1%	13.2%
UK	28.9%	47.0%	65.1%	78.7%	12.7%

The occupational profile is revealing for Ashfield and Mansfield, in that less people are employed within higher level jobs – managers/senior officials accounting for 13.6%, professionals 7.5%, and associate professionals 13.4% – in each case, significantly lower than the comparator averages. This reinforces the case that Ashfield and Mansfield is an area of relative lower private sector value activity when compared to the wider region and is economically disengaged from the Nottinghamshire core.

³⁹ An NVQ4+ level qualification is the equivalent of a first or foundation degree, diploma in higher education, HNC, HNDM or BTEC diploma, indicative of high employee skill levels. These are recognised as the skills required to drive innovation and leadership within an economy, and to enable businesses to compete globally. An NVQ2+ is the equivalent of five A* to C grades at GCSE or other vocational qualifications.

Figure 15: Occupations by residents in employment, 2009

Wage earnings are a key indicator of the interaction between labour supply and demand in an economy, and the living standards of its employees. High earnings can be an indicator of strong labour demand as well as higher value activities in an economy, whilst low wages could imply either low demand for labour or lower value added activities. Within Ashfield, workplace earnings are higher than the national average, having experienced marked increases between 2002 and 2009, indicating the presence of higher value economic activity within the District. This is in marked contrast with Mansfield, where wages are lower than all comparators, although in Ashfield they have grown considerably. The resident based earnings for both areas are notably lower than the sub-regional, regional and national levels, and in the case of Ashfield, lower than the workplace earnings, suggesting that residents are not benefiting from the propensity of knowledge intensive activity within the District.

Table 9: Full time workplace gross median weekly earnings, 2002-2009

	Earnings 2002 (£)	Earnings 2009 (£)	Change 2002 - 2009 (£)	% Change 2002 - 2009 (%)
Ashfield	339.2	458.5	119.3	35.2%
Mansfield	311.9	404.3	92.4	29.6%
Nottinghamshire	351.1	446.0	94.9	27.0%
East Midlands	362.3	456.6	94.3	26.0%
UK	390.9	488.7	97.8	25.0%

Table 10: Full time residence based gross median weekly earnings, 2002-2009

	Earnings 2002 (£)	Earnings 2009 (£)	Change 2002 - 2009 (£)	% Change 2002 – 2009 (%)
Ashfield	334.6	409.5	74.9	22.4%
Mansfield	346.7	421.7	75	21.6%
Nottinghamshire	375.0	476.0	101	26.9%
East Midlands	369.6	460.5	90.9	24.6%
UK	390.9	488.7	97.8	25.0%

APPENDIX 2

Summary of document analysis

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

LEGI	Local Enterprise Growth Initiative application form
EDSR	Economic Regeneration Strategy Review
SOD	State of the District
BS	2007 Business Survey
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SOA	State of Ashfield Report
PC	LSP Peer Challenge

Table 11: Summary of key points for Ashfield

Measure	Summary of key points
Measure 1 – The public economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashfield successfully worked together with the neighbouring districts of Mansfield and Bolsover to get LEGI status. Local organisations are now working together to give increased support to local businesses and to increase employment in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Local people will be given help to develop skills and find jobs (SCS, p14). There is recognition that there is a need for better access to services, from rural places to older people and those with limited mobility (SCS, p24).
Measure 2 – The commercial economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient numbers of people of working age indicating a low attractiveness as a place to live and work. Too few people in employment which may be more a short term macro-economic factor rather than long term problem. Too many people who could be working but who are not. Although worklessness is a stubborn problem, this analysis suggests that tackling it would have limited impact on overall economy compared to other factors. Those in employment work longer hours than the national average, indicating prevalence of lower productivity jobs. Productivity is considerably lower than the national average and identifying the root causes of this shortfall and how to tackle it will have the greatest impact on Ashfield's economic prosperity (EDSR, p11). The District is performing poorly in social indicators such as crime, deprivation and poor health. The economy remains industrial and has one of the lowest proportions of employment in the knowledge economy in the country, indicating continued structural problems as the District struggles to adapt to modern competitive pressures (SOD, p9). The Economic Development Strategy needs to be realigned to adequately meet the challenges identified in the prosperity gap model (EDSR, p24). There is a lack of demand for graduate level jobs – 40% say they would consider employing a graduate but many of them are not currently doing so and are not looking specifically for anyone with a degree. Only 22% of companies have staff aiming for professional status such as accountants (BS, p26). The knowledge economy stands at the heart of the SCS; it contains a central commitment to help develop entrepreneurship and support local innovation. There is a need for an educated, skilled and flexible workforce, adept in a range of modern IT skills (SCS, p6). The District is a net exporter of commuters due to proximity of key urban centres such as Nottingham (SCS, p22).

Measure	Summary of key points
Measure 4 – Commercial economy and its relationship with the public economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LSP is a soundly based and maturing partnership with strong commitment from the all the main public sector agencies and provides partners with a valuable network and information exchange mechanism. The LSP has helped to galvanise partnership activity and is a well run, supported and self aware organisation. Trust between partners is high. However not enough engagement with non-public sector partners, particularly within voluntary and community sector – improved levels of communication both within and outside the partnership needed. Also the private sector is not well enough represented (PC, p12). • Lack of private sector linkages, highlighted through the LSP – Rolls Royce are the LSP but never attend any meetings (PC, p9). • Area partnership groups have been set up in each of Ashfield’s four main areas made up of local people, public and private sector bodies, and CVS. They feed ideas into the Ashfield Partnership and make sure what is done is shaped by communities (SCS, 20).
Measure 5 – Public economy relationship with the commercial economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LSP is a soundly based and maturing partnership with strong commitment from all the main public sector agencies and provides partners with valuable network and information exchange mechanism. Has helped to galvanise partnership activity and is a well run, supported and self aware organisation. Trust between partners is high. However not enough engagement with non-public sector partners, particularly within the voluntary and community sector; improved levels of communication both within and outside the Partnership is needed. Also the private sector is not well enough represented (PC, p12). • A key challenge is for Ashfield District Council to ensure that external partners help it address the challenge of raising prosperity – the existing strategy is not adequate in this respect. It makes reference to key delivery partners, but no evidence to suggest what objectives these partners are responsible for – without this it is not possible to have accountability. There has been some progress in trying to align economic development activity with that of the LSP through the re-establishment of the economic regeneration thematic task group (EDSR, p24). • The review of the Economic Development Strategy recommends that all partners are accountable for delivering against the objectives of the strategy (EDSR, p27). • It is vital that the LSP does not become a talking shop, where partners are not able to see signs of progress or able to practically contribute. It may be necessary to create sub-economic development groups which are responsible for delivery against the three prosperity themes (more productive businesses, increasing the number of working age people in productive employment, and creating the conditions for sustainable growth). This will ensure that discussions and delivery are relevant to each and every partner (EDRS, p29). • The LEGI Programme is providing support to the local businesses and increasing the labour supply. • Alliance for Enterprise funded by LEGI (six year programme worth £7.2m) is designed to encourage and support the growth and development of new and existing enterprises and improve the economy in deprived areas. Two concepts behind it (SOA, p19): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ delivery of neighbourhood level outreach support to potential and all ready established businesses to connect local people to new employment; ◦ ceation of a longer term benefit through developing new culture enterprise, through promoting entrepreneurial ethos, providing access to employment for local people, and enhancing performance of local businesses.

Measure	Summary of key points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of LEGI funding is being coordinated by five work streams: (i) business and social enterprise support; (ii) business realm and property ladder; (iii) enterprise academy; (iv) making the connection; and (v) public procurement and local supply chain network (SOA, p19). • Area partnership groups have been set up in each of Ashfield’s four main areas – made up of local people, public and private sector bodies and CVS. They feed ideas into the Ashfield Partnership and ensure what is done is shaped by communities (SCS, p20). • Ashfield offers a range of advice and signposting services to the multitude of agencies operating in the area which can provide financial assistance to firms (SOA, p22).
Measure 6 – Public economy relationship with social economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LSP is a soundly based and maturing partnership with strong commitment from the all the main public sector agencies and provides partners with a valuable network and information exchange mechanism. The LSP has helped to galvanise partnership activity and is a well run, supported and self aware organisation. Trust between partners is high. However not enough engagement with non-public sector partners, particularly within voluntary and community sector; improved levels of communication both within and outside the partnership needed. Also the private sector is not well enough represented (PC, p12). • Ashfield Homes are particularly important for the District in improving the Council’s housing stock and has been awarded a top 3 star rating for its housing stock (SCS, p25). • The County Council has a track record of developing social enterprises in response to regeneration needs and includes hands on technical support, helping business planning, providing specialist financial advice and offering risk funding (SOA, p16). • Social enterprise support programme through LEGI – tailored programme of support through the development and implementation of the concept. Tailored support is to be the concentrated in the most deprived areas and closely linked to one-to-one business mentoring and the outreach business support projects. It will also help social enterprises identify existing opportunities for contracting with local authorities to run specific services; working with relevant departments to investigate ways in which council run services can be run effectively by being contracted out to social enterprises; supporting people in setting up a franchised service from another social enterprise which may be offering services elsewhere in the area (SOA, p17). • Social economy business development finance offer (County Council) provides financial assistance direct to social enterprises. There is also the social enterprise development fund, designed to offer financial support in strengthening and developing social enterprises across the County – new enterprises or helping existing ones (SOA, p21).
Measure 7 – Social economy relationship with public economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of meaningful relationships with the social sector. Disagreement with public sector representatives a few years ago (PC, p9). • Area partnership groups have been set up in each of Ashfield’s four main areas made up of local people, public and private sector bodies and CVS. They feed ideas into the Ashfield Partnership and ensure what is done is shaped by communities (SCS, p20). • Ashfield Homes are particularly important for the District in improving the Council’s housing stock – has been awarded a top 3 star rating for its housing stock (SCS, p25).

Measure	Summary of key points
Measure 8 – Commercial economy relationship with social economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 68% of businesses feel the area surrounding their business premises was a nice environment in which to work and most are satisfied with the infrastructure available (BS, p19). Area partnership groups have been set up in each of Ashfield’s four main areas made up of local people, public and private sector bodies and CVS. They feed ideas into the Ashfield Partnership and ensure what is done is shaped by communities (SCS, p20).
Measure 9 – Social economy relationship with commercial economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area partnership groups have been set up in each of Ashfield’s four main areas made up of local people, public and private sector bodies and CVS. They feed ideas into the Ashfield Partnership and ensure what is done is shaped by communities (SCS, p20).
Measure 11 – Relationship between the local economic territory and working within environmental limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite companies wanting to become greener, there is dissatisfaction from nearly half of the businesses about support from the Council in terms of facilities they are offering businesses (e.g. recycling) (BS, p20). Recognition that there is a need for better parks and public spaces, businesses need to be greener and recycling and energy efficiency needs to increase. Ashfield has gained the Green Flag Award for improved parks and public space at Brierley Forest Park, Lawns Pleasure Grounds and Portland Park (SCS, p25).
Measure 12 – Relationship between the local economic territory and local identity, history and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town centre masterplanning now underway for Hucknall, Sutton and Kirkby. Local people putting forward their views on how they see their towns – past, present and future – and plans being agreed on how to tackle the local problems (SCS, p25)
Measure 13 – Relationship between the local economic territory and government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the Economic Development Strategy is part of establishing a clearer framework within which economic development can be effectively delivered – they are actively considering the implications of change through the implementation of new national policies such as the sub-national review, looking at structural and delivery opportunities and challenges.

NB: Infrastructural issues

- Many businesses feel congestion can be a problem, particularly around the Kirkby one way systems, Derby Road in Annesley, and J28 of the M1. However most businesses feel there is good road access in the area (BS, p24).
- Accessibility and connectivity in Ashfield are average (SCS, p22).
- Need to become a more connected district, including joining up transport links, including those with Nottingham City.
- M1 particularly important for the local economy, providing good connections to other economies.

Other

- A number of key projects that are underway or have been completed are outlined in the State of Ashfield Report (SOA), including: new £1.6 million Ashfield Skills Centre; Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR), which includes Kings Mill; e-procurement, financial assistance for start-ups and existing businesses; masterplanning for the town centres; and work around a new business park next to J28 of the M1.
- Ashfield’s main competitive advantage is its strategic location in the middle of the country. Its immediate access to the M1 and location within the principle cities of Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield is a key geographical advantage. The opportunities include access to a wide range of consumer and business markets, and a large potential regional labour pool. What it does mean is that the district is prime for logistics and distribution activities (SOA, p23).

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

LEGI	Local Enterprise Growth Initiative bid
EX	Experian report
CS	Community Strategy
CSSR	Core Strategic Scoping Report
CC	Creating a City Centre
RS	Draft Regeneration Strategy

Table 12: Summary of key points for Mansfield

Measure	Summary of key points
Measure 2 – The commercial economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of living is lower than both national and regional averages therefore wage rates to attract a readily available and adaptable workforce are more reasonable (CC). • Increased level of business start-ups (CS). • Importantly, both districts have the human capital available to them to support the expansion of businesses – 61% of residents in Ashfield and 62% in Mansfield are of working age (EX).
Measure 3 – The social economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents/volunteers are now central to the production of neighbourhood action plans – local decisions on priorities (CS). • Over 1000 new volunteers placed in the community (CS).
Measure 4 – Commercial economy and its relationship with the public economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mansfield 2020 and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce are members of MASP (CS).
Measure 5 – Public economy relationship with the commercial economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mansfield’s disadvantaged areas benefit from programme funding through the LEGI which focuses on promoting an entrepreneurial ethos, providing access to employment for local people and enhancing the performance of local business (CSSR). • The refurbished railway station will soon be complemented by a new state of the art bus station to create an integrated transport interchange (CC). • Mansfield District Council, Nottinghamshire Primary Care Trust, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police and West Nottinghamshire College are all core members of MASP (CS). • Mansfield/Ashfield regeneration route completed on time and to budget (CS). • Funding for new business incubation units secured (CS). • To change this situation, Mansfield District Council will support the efforts of companies in developing drivers of productivity through investment, innovation, skills, enterprise and helping develop a competitive advantage (RS).

Measure	Summary of key points
Measure 6 – Public economy relationship with social economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mansfield District Council, Nottinghamshire Primary Care Trust, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police and West Nottinghamshire College are all core members of MASP. • The Sustainable Community Strategy has identified social inclusion and community cohesion as key priorities for action and hope to reduce the level of poverty, discrimination and other forms of social exclusion as well as increasing the number of volunteers working in their own community (CS).
Measure 7 – Social economy relationship with public economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mansfield CVS and Mansfield Community Empowerment Network are core members of MASP (CS). • The Community Empowerment Network ensures all groups, including the Board, have representation from the community and that there is good local knowledge on which to base decisions (CS). • The Sustainable Community Strategy has identified social inclusion and community cohesion as key priorities for action and hope to reduce the level of poverty, discrimination and other forms of social exclusion as well as increasing the number of volunteers working in their own community (CS).
Measure 8 – Commercial economy relationship with social economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mansfield 2020 and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce are members of MASP (CS)
Measure 9 – Social economy relationship with commercial economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mansfield CVS and Mansfield Community Empowerment Network are core members of MASP (CS). • The Community Empowerment Network ensures that all groups, including the Board, have representation from the community and that there is good local knowledge on which to base decisions (CS).
Measure 10 – Broad economic context and the relationship to the local economic territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of graduates in the local labour force is perceived as a constraint/threat to the creation of a more diverse and stronger local economy (CSSR). • The cumulative impact of vulnerable town centre competition from Nottingham, Sheffield, Derby and Meadowhall, and recent improvements to these shopping destinations makes Mansfield vulnerable and at risk of decline should improvements not be made to its retail offer (CSSR). • Mansfield is at the heart of the fifth largest urban area in the East Midlands and is one of 64 British urban areas recognised as being of city size (CC). • The successful development and extension of a commercial airport just across the border into Yorkshire has further improved the area’s international linkages and now Robin Hood Airport provides a real alternative to East Midlands Airport, both of which are easily accessible in just over half an hour (CC). • Mansfield recognises that successful city centres are a result of close integration between local transport, housing and economic development strategies. A good transport network is the backbone for commuting and movement within an urban centre (CC). • Ashfield and Mansfield each account for a modest proportion of the East Midlands GVA. In 2008, Ashfield and Mansfield contributed 2.4% and 1.9% towards the total output of the East Midlands respectively (EX). • Ashfield and Mansfield account for a fairly small proportion of full-time equivalent jobs within the East Midlands (EX). • The physical location of Ashfield and Mansfield, in terms of their proximity to major markets, is arguably their principal asset. In fact, the Districts sit in the heart of a sphere of economic activity which includes Sheffield and Leeds to the North, Manchester and Birmingham to the West and Nottingham and Leicester to the South (EX). • The affordability of both business premises and housing in Mansfield and Ashfield should be a draw both for businesses and the workers they need respectively (EX).

Measure	Summary of key points
Measure 11 – Relationship between the local economic territory and working within environmental limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have conducted a review in order to assess what options will be most sustainable for the future development of Mansfield District and the key sustainability issues that are affecting the area (CSSR). • Reducing the District’s carbon footprint by reducing CO₂ emissions from transport and buildings is one of the key outcomes identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy (CSSR). • Indicator ‘percentage of all household waste recycled’ is relatively low (CSSR). • Ensure location of development makes efficient use of existing infrastructure (CSSR). • Ensure that economic growth goes hand-in-hand with high quality environment (CSSR).
Measure 12 – Relationship between the local economic territory and local identity, history and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Index for Multiple Deprivation for 2007 (published in 2009) ranks Mansfield as the 34th most deprived area in the country. It revealed 12 of the 66 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA’s) were in the 10% most deprived nationally (CSSR). • The District of Mansfield is a relatively compact and largely urban district situated in North Nottinghamshire with the City of Nottingham located 24km South; it covers an area of 78 square kilometres, has an estimated population of 100,600 residents (ONS 2008 mid year estimate) and provides jobs for 39,500 people (2007 Annual Business Inquiry) (CSSR). • Despite its predominately urban character, approximately 64% of the District’s area is countryside. This surrounds the two urban areas and provides a degree of separation between them (CSSR). • The long term trend of population decline which was linked to the demise of the area’s mining and textile industry has begun to reverse with an estimated rise in the District’s population of 2,419 (2.5%) between 2001 and 2008 (ONS mid year estimate). However, despite this, the District has a higher proportion of people who are aged 65 and over compared to England as a whole. The corollary to this is that there are lower proportions in other age groups with young adults aged 15-29 particularly under represented (CSSR). • Mansfield is a district that suffers from a high level of acute social problems that present a number of wide ranging challenges. The health of Mansfield’s population is a particular issue; 18,032 households in the District contain one or more people suffering from a long term limiting illness, representing just under half of all households in the District and higher than the national figure of 33% (CSSR). • Three new public artworks were installed in three key gateway locations to the centre of Mansfield (CC). • The District has successfully dealt with the loss of its traditional industries and now has an economy sustained by a diverse range of modern businesses that are transforming the area (CC). • In terms of the very well qualified – those qualified to NVQ level 4 or above – Mansfield and Ashfield fall well below regional and national averages (EX). • The Index of Multiple Deprivation (CLG, 2007) places Mansfield as the 35th most deprived district in England, and Ashfield as the 82nd – in other words, Mansfield is in the top 10% most deprived, and Ashfield in the top 25%. Both districts suffer on many quality of life drivers in comparison with the East Midlands and the UK as a whole (EX). • Whilst Mansfield is an important sub-regional service centre, the industrial history of the District means that it does not have the range or quality of facilities expected in a modern major urban area. The quality of retail provision is relatively low, entertainment facilities also lack range or quality, and there is very limited local access to higher education. Access to the national road transport network is of varying quality and the town has no direct access to national rail services (RS).

Measure	Summary of key points
Measure 13 – Relationship between the local economic territory and government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) has highlighted Mansfield as a regional economic priority. Structural weaknesses identified in the RES relate to the need to address the low pay/skill equilibrium and to develop a knowledge intensive economy to address the productivity gap (CSSR). • In Nottinghamshire, a partnership has been formed to carry out the work of the initial stage of the sustainability assessment. The partnership comprises all local planning authorities in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and the main objective of this joint approach is to simplify the process of collecting baseline information (CSSR). • The links to regional and sub-regional organisations are critical for success. At all stages, we ensure we integrate our work with the Nottinghamshire Partnership and the Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement (LAA). We also work to ensure that our plans for land usage are fully integrated with the Local Development Framework (LDF) which in itself is informed by the Regional Spatial Strategy. We maintain a strong and positive dialogue with central government through our links with Government Office East Midlands (CS). • The partnership believes that much more of the decision making currently taking place at national, regional or district level can be taken at local or neighbourhood level (CS). • The Council advocates the principle of subsidiarity and is committed to working with partners across Nottinghamshire and the region to deliver regional strategic priorities and add further value locally (RS).

APPENDIX 3

Consultees

CONSULTEES

Ashfield District Council (x3)

Mansfield District Council (x2)

Mansfield CVS (x1)

Mansfield Woodhouse Community Development Group (x1)

Ashfield Links Forum (x1)

Nottinghamshire County Council (x1)

Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chambers of Commerce (x1)

Mansfield 2020 (x1)

MASP (x1)

Local Enterprise Growth Initiative management (x1)

APPENDIX 4
Example proforma

EXAMPLE PROFORMA

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Date: _____

THEME 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC SECTOR AND PRIVATE SECTOR
What do you perceive to be the strengths and challenges of the public sector within the locality?
How do you view the existing relationship between the public and private sector?
How has the public sector worked to develop a strong commercial sector?
How has the public sector managed the environment to make the locality an attractive place for the private sector to invest? (e.g. Broadband, office space availability, cultural assets)
In your opinion, is there a joined up approach across the public sector to ensure ease of engagement for the commercial sector?
Has there been any attempted engagement with the private sector around developing a Business Improvement District or initiating supplementary business rates to improve the locality?

Can you give any examples of successful joint projects that have been implemented by the public sector in partnership with the commercial sector that have made a positive impact on the locality?
How do you think the relationship between the public sector and the private sector could be developed?
THEME 2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC SECTOR AND SOCIAL SECTOR
How do you view the relationship between the public and social economy?
How does the public economy use or support social enterprises within the locality?
How has the public sector worked to develop a strong social economy?
In your opinion, is there a joined up approach across the public sector to ensure ease of engagement for the social sector?
Can you give any examples of successful joint projects that have been implemented by the public sector in partnership with the social sector that have made a positive impact on the locality?
How do you think the relationship between the public sector and the social sector could be developed?