

Economic Action Plan for Longridge

Introduction

This document sets out a number of actions to support the economy of the town of Longridge and the rural area that surrounds it. Our aspirations are for the whole area to be economically vibrant and sustainable and to enhance Longridge's role as a Market Town. A Town Team made up of the following organisations has been formed to work in partnership for the purpose of monitoring, reviewing and developing the plan and to maintain a relevant long-term economic strategy for the area, based on comprehensive, sustainability principles:

- Longridge Town Council (LTC)
- Longridge Business Group (LBG)
- Longridge Social Enterprise Company (LSEC)
- Longridge Partnership (LP)
- Lancashire County Council (LCC)
- Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC)

Business Link North West (BLNW) will also contribute towards the actions within the plan as the regions business support organisation. The key to success is to find a way in which the objectives of the Longridge Economic Action Plan can be taken forward in a way that can be sustained in the long term. The role of the group is to make sure that things get done, organisations work together and that there are longer-term plans in place. It will also bring together other local groups and public agencies as appropriate to work in a coordinated and focussed way towards achieving its objectives.

Background

Longridge is a major settlement within the Ribble Valley. It has a long history of social and industrial change over the last 200 years. Longridge first became recognised as a market town at the end of the 18th Century when the town became a focal point for the local farming community. Longridge has seen a sustained growth in population in recent years and plays a continued role as key local service centre.

The main aims of this action plan document seek to support the aspirations of all partners involved towards promoting Longridge as a retail, business and leisure destination to consumers and other businesses in the North West, ensuring that the trading environment in the town is conducive to the success of businesses and encourage the establishment of other businesses in the town and generally aid in developing the potential of Longridge environmentally, socially and economically. Longridge is a rural service centre. Maintaining this is vital to the economic prosperity of the town.

ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN: -

Project / Theme 1	Actions / Activities	Outputs	Reason	Lead	Others	Times
Supporting and sustaining new and existing businesses in Longridge	Work with the Longridge Business Group strengthen local businesses involvement, activities and increase membership	Increase current membership of LBG from 44 to 75 by December 2010.	Increased membership and involvement will create increased revenues for the group and enable greater activities to support trade and promotion.	LBG	RVBC	Jun-10 ongoing
	Develop a database of Longridge businesses and the surrounding area for communication purposes	Regular updates on business support, activities and events in Longridge and to promote good news stories.	So that Longridge businesses can be contacted on issues of relevance	LBG	RVBC	Jun-10 ongoing
	Establish a business support hub in the centre of Longridge within the refurbished Station Buildings.	Businesses will have access to the facility for meetings, hot desking and small conferences and seminars provided by business support providers. Presentation, ICT and fast Broadband facilities also.	So that local businesses have access to information and facilities and increase potential of new investors/business start up activity in the area	LSEC	RVBC / LCC / BL	Aug-10
	Increase the provision of business support. Plan and deliver a series of business support events/activities in Longridge.	Establish and produce a calendar of business support events for 2010/2011	So that local businesses have access to information and facilities and increase potential of new investors/business start up activity in the area	RVBC	LBG / LCC / BL	Aug-10
	Identify opportunities for new business, promote inward investment and monitor empty or	Joint marketing of empty property with agents	Reduce the number of empty premises and increase employment, trade and footfall.	Town Team	RVBC / LEP	Sep-10

Project / Theme 1	Actions / Activities	Outputs	Reason	Lead	Others	Times
Supporting and sustaining new and existing businesses in Longridge	<i>underused business sites and premises and assist in their marketing/promotion.</i>					
	<i>Produce a gap analysis to proactively identify business and enterprise opportunities across retail and service sector delivery.</i>	Produce Retail Health Check Report for the group with options.	Having a good mix of retail service provides self-containment for Longridge.	RVBC	LBG / LSEC	Jul-10
	<i>Analyse & review the support available for Longridge businesses and seek measures to fill these gaps where possible.</i>	Put together a business support portfolio for Longridge firms and develop as necessary	So that local firms know exactly what support is available to them	BLNW	RVBC / LBG	Sep-10
	<i>Assist in the provision for a local delivery point for business training.</i>	Set up the Old Station Buildings to provide training facilities for local firms	So that local firms can access information	LSEC	RVBC / BL	Aug-10
	<i>Produce a study to examine availability of broadband provision in Longridge.</i>	Broadband study	To ensure that businesses can access broadband	RVBC	LCC	Oct-10
	<i>Work with existing businesses to develop the evening and overall hospitality and leisure economy in Longridge.</i>	Set up a specialist evening economy group through Longridge Business Group	So that they can develop ideas, arrange joint marketing and pool resources to strengthen their offer.	LBG	RVBC / LBG	Sep - 10
	<i>Work with partners to identify the potential for a small business incubation facility in Longridge.</i>	Identify if there is a need for new business start up space	So that potential new businesses can access affordable accommodation	LCC	LSEC / RVBC	Oct-10

Project / Theme 2	Actions / Activities	Outputs	Reason	Lead	Others	Times
Improving the Environment and appearance of Longridge and the overall visitor experience	Conduct regular audits of the Town Centre area to assess areas of poor visual quality, empty and underused business and other property around the town centre and other shopping areas.	Create a list of empty property in Longridge town centre	To ensure that available business property is being promoted throughout the area	Town Team	RVBC / LBG	Jul-10
	Development of a programme of year round town centre events linked to an enhanced visitor offering. Programme designed to appeal to local people and visitors.	List of events and explore possibilities to develop more	Objective is to create vibrancy in the town centre and develop a tangible reason to visit and return.	LTC	RVBC / LP	Jul-10
	Work with existing agencies to promote Longridge and the surrounding area.	Organise contact / meetings with Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board and other tourism groups	To ensure that there is a coordinated approach to marketing Longridge.	Town Team	RVBC / LBG	2010 ongoing
	Create marketing material and work with existing tourism and marketing agencies to ensure Longridge receives adequate coverage.	Detailed list of marketing/promotional activities and there sources	To ensure there is enough information marketing Longridge as a visitor destination	Town Team	LBTB RVBC / LTC / RPL	Jul-10
	Assess the viability of increasing visitor accommodation in the town and explore the potential for a new hotel development.	Create and maintain a list of holiday accommodation in Longridge	To ensure that there are adequate visitor accommodation in Longridge	Town Team	RVBC / LBG	October 2010 ongoing
	Promote links and strengthen information to the M6 motorway along with the north, south, east and west connections to all major conurbations.	Examine current signage and potential additional sites with LCC and Highways Agency	To ensure that there are adequate directions to the area from major transport routes	Town Team	RVBC / LTC	Sep-10

Project / Theme 2	Actions / Activities	Outputs	Reason	Lead	Others	Times
Environment and appearance of Longridge and the overall visitor experience	Assist in raising the customer experience in all Longridge businesses. Work with new and existing businesses to develop a strong hospitality offer.	Arrange through Preston College Retail Centre of Excellence & Business Link customer care workshops in Longridge	This will focus on improving customer experience and undertaking appropriate training where necessary.	BLNW	RVBC / LBG	Jul-10
	Investigate the potential to implement traffic calming along Berry Lane and other routes into and around the town centre.	Hold discussions with Lancashire County Council to identify possible improvement measures	To help create a safer environment for pedestrians and shoppers along Berry Lane	Town Team	RVBC / LTC / LCC	Nov-10
	Assist the development of Longridge Town Centre, including the encouragement of independent shops and its potential development as a specialty shopping centre.	LBG to identify opportunities for new business creation to enhance the current retail offer in Longridge town centre	To assist the creation of an attractive retail mix in the town centre	Town Team	RVBC / LBG	Sept-10
	Support partners to develop activities to improve visitor experience (i.e. Longridge in Bloom)	Longridge in Bloom currently being worked on by Longridge Partnership	Improve the appearance of the area.	LTC	RVBC / LBG / LP	Jul-10
	Work with the private sector and Longridge Partnership to encourage the usage of Leisure arts and cultural facilities.	Discuss with Cinema owners future options and assist in accessing potential funding	To ensure Longridge retains current leisure / cultural facilities	Town Team	RVBC / LP	Oct-10
	Introduce measures to further enhance the character of Berry Lane and its buildings such as the old Fire Station, including potential expansion of the Conservation Area.	Set up a work programme of street and building enhancements/maintenance for Berry Lane.	Work with existing property owners along Berry Lane	LCC	RVBC / LTC / LCC	Oct-10

Project / Theme 3	Actions / Activities	Outputs	Reason	Lead	Others	Times
Enhancing the role of Longridge as a Key Rural Service Centre	<i>To research key service provision in Longridge and the surrounding rural area and identify gaps in need (i.e. healthcare and other services).</i>	Produce a register of key service providers in Longridge	To ensure that Longridge has adequate provision of services to the local community	LP	RVBC / LBG / LP	Jul - 10
	<i>To research examples of good practice in order to identify opportunities that will enhance economic position of Longridge and how these can be best delivered.</i>	Examine case studies from other town's with similar size and demography	To assist the ongoing development of the Longridge economy	RVBC	RVBC	July - 10 ongoing
	<i>Work with transport providers to seek ways to maintain and improve provision of public transport in the area particularly connections with the rural hinterland, including opportunities for community transport schemes / community enterprise options.</i>	Map out provision of public transport to include connections with the rural hinterland.	To assess where improvements to provision need to be made	Town Team	RVBC / LSEC	Oct-10
	Monitor the local economy through key statistics, including those related to business activity, employment levels, business and community training needs and take-up, and land and premises availability.	Create a list of key statistics for Longridge (employment, no of businesses etc) to be updated on a quarterly basis.	To have up to date statistical information about Longridge	RVBC	LCC	July - 10 ongoing
	Bring together private sector partners, the council and existing owners where appropriate with a view to developing sites identified for improvement.	Firstly identify key sites for improvement - Town Team to discuss.	To identify new business investment opportunities in Longridge	Town Team	RVBC / LBG / LP / LTC	Oct-10

Project / Theme 4	Actions / Activities	Outputs	Reason	Lead Partner	Delivery Partners	Timescales
Strengthen economic opportunities and relationships between town and the wider area	Develop a wider network of businesses beyond the town centre covering all sectors across the wider geographic area of Longridge.	Create a Longridge Business Database and develop from current list of around 200 contacts.	To assist in marketing business support and events to Longridge businesses.	RVBC	BL / LBG	Jul-10
	Promote tourism links and develop potential across the wider Longridge area (i.e. Longridge Conservation Area, Alston, Sharley Fold Farm, the gateway to Forest of Bowland and the Hodder Valley and paths for walkers).	Set up a Longridge Tourism Group and examine material promoting the area and report back to Town Team	To assist growth in local tourism and help increase visitors to the town	LCC	RVBC / LBG / LCC	Sep-10
	Programme of activity to identify buildings and sites throughout the wider area with potential for rural diversification and other new enterprises.	Create a list of buildings / business premises outside the Town Centre - report back to Town Team	To assist growth in local employment potential.	RVBC & Town Team	LBG / LP / LTC	Dec-10
	Develop ongoing communications with the neighbouring Preston City Council in planning industrial development particularly in relation to Shay Lane Industrial area.	Set up an initial meeting with PCC Economic Development staff to discuss future development possibilities for Shay Lane	Shay Lane Industrial area has been identified as a key site for employment creation for Longridge but lies within PCC boundaries	Town Team	RVBC / LTC / LCC	Jul-10

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