

Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership Report of the Level 1 LEED Workshop

*held on 20th January 2013, Rural Innovation Centre at Harnhill, Royal
Agricultural University*



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1. Purpose of report

This report is a note of a Level 1 workshop of Local Environment and Economic Development (LEED) process. LEED is a toolkit designed to support Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to identify key *opportunities and threats* to *local economic plans* which stem from the *economy's dependence on the environment*. These are significant, but normally given insufficient consideration in economic development planning, partly because the complexity of the evidence base makes them hard to assess. LEED was developed by Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission and Defra in conjunction with four LEPs.

Level 1 of the LEED process is designed to gather local experts in the environment and the economy, in order to arrive at an interim list of opportunities and threats, via a structured process. The evidence base behind these opportunities and threats can then be further tested and refined through Levels 2 and 3 of the toolkit if required. More information on LEED can be found [here](#).

2. Brief report of meeting

- The meeting was chaired by Roger Mortlock, Chief Executive at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, and facilitated by Tim Sunderland, Principal Specialist in Economics at Natural England. Tim Sunderland gave an introduction to the LEED toolkit at the beginning.
- Peter Carr, Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP, gave an overview of the LEP strategic economic plans. Priorities for the LEP are;
 - Supporting high growth potential businesses to move on to the next stage
 - Improvements to transport connectivity
 - Opening up employment land, particularly around the motorway corridor
 - Ensuring an effective business support and skills offer.
- Gloucestershire has a diverse economy without dominant clusters of particular sectors. Recognizing this, it is still possible to highlight some sectors with significant growth potential;
 - Knowledge intensive business sectors
 - Medium/high-tech manufacturing
 - Businesses with high potential for export growth
 - Low carbon energy including nuclear and renewable;

For more detail see the GFirst [Strategic Economic Plan](#).

- Delegates worked through the environmental dependencies and relationships of the economy in three groups; the first looked at priority sectors, the second looked at places and the third looked at the whole economy. After this new groups looked at the emerging opportunities and threats, which were ranked and prioritised, and then after lunch responses to the emerging opportunities and threats were discussed.
- The groups had productive conversations and these are captured on the attached worksheets.

3. Some Opportunities and Threats from the meeting notes

The opportunities and threats listed below are presented in order of the prioritisation at the workshop. A one day workshop can only produce an interim list, due to both constrained time and the need to consult experts who were unable to attend. Some of the opportunities and threats identified also have weaker links to the environment than would be expected under the LEED process. More specific and worked through opportunities and threats are produced by Levels 2 & 3 of the toolkit.

Opportunities



O1: Green Infrastructure in new developments

- Green Infrastructure is planned approach to the delivery of nature and the benefits it brings. Examples include flood control, reductions in air pollution and opportunities for recreation. Green Infrastructure must be planned strategically at landscape scale for the fullest benefit.



O2: Centre of Excellence for electrical engineering linked to renewables

- Renewables are a central part of the solution to the low carbon energy challenge, and skills for renewables are highlighted in the strategic economic plan. Potential to link up with Stroud College (SGS).



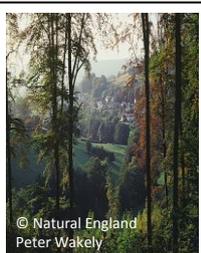
O3: Grow knowledge intensive and creative industries

- There is an opportunity to position the county as a live work destination using brands like 'cool cotswolds'. Broadband delivery will be an essential element of this. This can be connected to the creative economy and the local festivals.



O4: Gloucestershire's attractive landscape

- Gloucestershire's attractive landscape and quality of life are a major draw for high value added businesses. It is important that economic development maintains this attractiveness. Particularly important are the health and wellbeing benefits of landscape quality and recreational opportunities.



O5: Offsetting carbon with woodland

- New woodland, and bringing woodland into management, can make a contribution Climate Change Act targets, albeit small compared to the volume of UK emissions. Woodland also provides a wide variety of other benefits including flood control, recreation and wildlife habitat.



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O6: Tourism

- Growth in tourism is an opportunity in terms of increased employment, particularly in rural areas. This needs managing in order not to damage what makes the area attractive. Traffic management and a 'bed tax' which was invested back into the local environment are opportunities.



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O7: Green Integrated Transport Schemes.

- Green integrated transport schemes offer opportunities in terms of low carbon transport, reduced air pollution, reduced noise and increased accessibility for those without cars. They also help to protect the attractive character of the area.

Threats Summary



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T1: Flooding

- The development zone in the growth plan is at risk of flooding. Changes to land use and management, both in the Cotswolds and further upstream could have a significant mitigatory impact. Advocacy for these changes is required, as is joint working with Local Authorities and the Environment Agency.



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T2: Overlooking agricultural quality and diversity

- Agriculture is important to the economy and to the character of the area. It is important that economic potential in this sector is not overlooked, particularly with regard to high-value added brands and export potential. There is an opportunity in marketing the provenance and environmental credentials of food and drink products.



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T3: 'Just another motorway intersection'

- Gloucestershire's unique and attractive landscape is not as well showcased from the main road networks as it could be. There is a danger that further development makes this worse and the sense of place around that area is further eroded. A vision for high-quality development is therefore required.



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T4: Economic growth increases demand for energy

- All things being equal, economic growth will increase demand for energy, which will make meeting Climate Change Act targets significant harder. There are roles for planning, design, energy efficiency technologies and changes to consumer demand to meet this threat.



T5: 'Missing Link' damages ecological and tourist connections

- Improvements to the A417/419 are a key part of the LEPs plans for improved connection to London. This improvement could sever ecological and footpath connections, but need not if this issue is considered in the planning.



T6: Drought

- Although flooding has been the dominant issue in recent years, the climate change projections are for increased variability and extreme weather. Drought is therefore a risk to the whole economy, but particularly agriculture. Changes to land use and management which mitigate flooding also prepare for drought.

4. How would Level 2 of the toolkit take this forward?

The Level 1 workshop was an interesting and stimulating exploration of the relationship between the economy and the environment. However, this relationship is very complex, and it's realistically only possible to begin to explore it in a one day workshop. Additionally, it is necessarily difficult to get all the relevant expertise in one room at the same time. For this reason the emergent list of opportunities and threats should be seen as an initial or interim assessment.

Level 2 of the toolkit is a structured process in which the views of all the relevant local partners in the areas of environment and economy are interviewed, and offer their views, and supporting evidence about what the major threats and opportunities are. This may confirm or challenge the opportunities and threats which emerged from Level 1. It is also very likely that there are additional opportunities and threats which did not emerge from the Level 1 workshop, which will also emerge. This grounding in the local expertise will help to provide an evidence base to influence the Strategic Economic Plan.

The Level 2 process would work up the opportunities and threats in greater detail, offer evidence of justify them, and make them more specific. It would also capture the views of local partners about the best approaches and solutions to them.

5. Attendees

Peter Carr	Deputy Chief Executive	GFirst LEP
Roger Mortlock	Chief Executive	Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Colin Studholme	Director of Conservation	Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Tim Sunderland	Principal Specialist Economics	Natural England
Gerry Hammersley	Area Manager	Natural England
Esther Kieboom	Economist	Cumulus Consultants
Janet Dwyer	Prof. Rural Policy	University of Gloucester
Sophia Price		Cotswold D.C.

Simon Pickering

Ecotricity

Dorian Wragg

Phillip Sheldrake

RSPB

Gary King

Meyrick Brentnall

Martin Bruton

Simon King

Director

Business Development Centre, RAU

Nigel Riglar

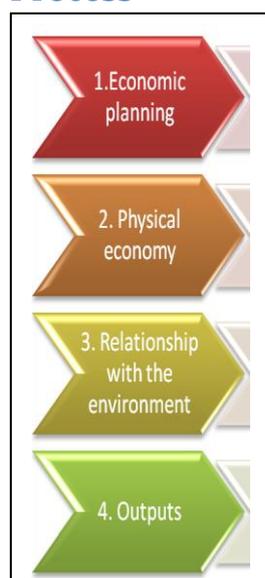
Gloucestershire C.C.

6. Study Methodology

Aim

The aim of this study was to support strategic economic planning through the identification of opportunities and threats to the economy of the area which stem from the economy's dependence on the environment. To do this the LEED process is designed to help LEPs make sense of the mass of complex environmental information and distil it into key points demanding action.

Process



The process starts with standard economic planning. For this study we considered the current situation and the LEP's strategic growth plan. This is available from economic planning documents.

In section 2 we consider what this means in physical terms, particularly in terms of energy and material inputs, and waste and emissions.

This puts us in a position to consider how the economy relates to the environment and the trajectory of these relationships in future. We do this using the Ecosystem Approach (explained below).

Finally we are able to list opportunities and threats to the economy, and consider strategic and tactical solutions.

Ecosystem Services

This study makes use of the Ecosystem Services Framework, which is recognised as best practice in scientific and policy terms for considering the environment/economy relationship. The Ecosystem Services Framework considers the dependence of the economy on the environment in four categories;

- Provisioning services - material such as timber, water and crops.
- Regulating services - the ways in which the environment provides order and structure, such as flood control. Regulating services are normally taken for granted until damaged.
- Cultural services – non-material dependencies, such as the dependence of tourism on the attractiveness of a destination.

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- Supporting services – the natural cycles that the other services depend upon, such as the water cycle.

This approach ensures that the work is systematic and rigorous, and allows it to be compared to other work in this area.