

Good Jobs for Liskeard.

14.11.06

Aim and Background

- Liskeard is the hub of South-East Cornwall, its service centre and the only town in the district that is outside the Plymouth PUA, has a full range of services and is served by the national (trunk) road network and main line rail.
- The aim is seen as providing the environment, opportunity and facility for people in Liskeard and the surrounding villages to be able to find good local employment. There will always be some who choose to live and work in different communities, but the town should also offer the opportunity for work to those who wish to work here but choose to live elsewhere.
- The prosperity of any community depends on the wealth created by its members. If the town and surrounding settlements are to thrive, then the jobs offered locally must provide them with that wealth. Well-paid local jobs also reduce the desire or necessity for people to travel elsewhere for employment.
- If the right sort of jobs are to be created within or attracted to the town, then the town must be attractive to those who bring their business here and to those they employ. The vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre and the facilities it provides are one absolutely fundamental factor in this. A new town centre group will discuss how this can be achieved. However, other factors are also influential and cannot be ignored; these include the range of goods, services and activities available locally, the urban and rural environment and the character of and sense of community within the whole town.
- A prosperous community in which people work thus acquire their wealth locally contains disposable income that residents tend to spend locally. Local business then procures goods and services locally itself. It is proven that £1 spent in local business circulates locally about 11 times. A beneficial spiral is thus created. Every £1 spent in a national business such as a supermarket disappears out of the local economy.
- Thus an attractive town centre will attract the right sort of business and create good local employment which will create the wealth on which the local economy can thrive – the beneficial spiral again.
- But the above contains a degree of “chicken and egg” issues and thus we must strive to provide the kick-start for this process. Raising the profile of the town can help to do this provided that the businesses in the town were to simultaneously raise their game to justify the hype.

The Statistics.

- Statistical calculations regarding employment are, as with many statistics, difficult to produce with accuracy. Whilst up to date information may be available about those working or otherwise, an accurate population count is only carried out at the ten-yearly census.

Using the 2001 figures for population and demographic breakdown, the population of Liskeard was 8656 (a) of which 4832 (b) fell into the 16 – 59 age bracket.

Using the latest figures from NOMIS, within the two wards that make up Liskeard, there are 115 people (2.3% of b) receiving Job Seekers Allowance and 675 (7.8% of a, 14% of b) receiving Incapacity Benefit or Invalid Care Allowance. Also there are 370 people (7.7% of b) in receipt of Income Support. IB and ICA are not, of course, only paid to those in the 16 – 59 age bracket and IS is also payable to people who are working.

Overall, therefore it would not be an unreasonable conclusion that there are around 750 people (about 15%) in the age bracket 16 – 59 who are economically inactive.

The figures do not capture those in the 16 – 59 age bracket who are in receipt of, for example, a private pension and have taken early retirement but equally there are many economically active people who are over 60.

However, it is reasonably safe to draw the conclusion that there are around 4,300 economically active people in Liskeard, roughly half the population.

- About 1900 people leave Liskeard every day to go to work. If the above figures are even vaguely correct, that is somewhere in the region of 40 – 50% of the working population either choose not to work in the town or cannot access the right sort of job there. However, a lot come into the town either from surrounding villages or further afield such that there is a net inflow.
- Liskeard is forecast to grow at a rate of around 250 persons per annum. On this basis, the number of economically active people should increase by about 125 p.a. There may be some development in the surrounding villages that will result in a higher demand for jobs in the town.
- It would be nice to be able to repatriate some of the jobs to which residents commute. If roughly half were of those who leave town to work were to return over a twenty-five year period, this would give a rate of 40 p.a.
- There should thus be a target of creating 150 and 175 jobs in the town each year, or around 4,000 jobs over 25 years.

The issues

- As the town grows, there is a natural tendency to provide employment sites on the periphery, often for good reasons such as accessibility. However, by divorcing these from the business heart of the town, little is done to enhance or maintain the vitality and viability of the centre and pressure grows for increased peripheral development of shops and services. Under these circumstances, sequential testing is intended to provide a deterrent but is rarely sufficiently robust to do this effectively. Local policies are thus required to strengthen this process and deter any tendency for drift away from the centre.
- The centre of the town has already been intensively developed, largely in an unplanned manner, and few if any sites exist which are suitable and available for employment use. Additionally, because they have been previously unprotected, some employment sites that have recently become vacant have been lost to housing; a policy of protecting employment sites is thus required.
- Historically there was little hard evidence of demand for employment premises in the town; as a result, little land has been zoned for employment and this lack of opportunity has been a major contributory factor in the local economy growing much slower than elsewhere in the district and county. Recently the Local Authority has kept records indicative of demand and the case can be more readily made. However, pressure will be needed to ensure that provision remains adequate as the town grows.
- There is thus a need both to provide new jobs for the growing population and to raise the GVA of existing ones.
- Currently unemployment is low and the available labour pool is generally relatively unskilled. In order to improve the economy and increase GVA, it will be necessary to encourage people with higher skills into the local communities as well as improving training opportunities for those that are already live here.
- We need to grow jobs by up to about 4,000 and overall productivity by something approaching 100%.
- We need to target business that pays good rates – but will also need to attract the skills to earn this. Suggested average of somewhere in the region of £15 per hour might indicate the sectors of interest.
- There will be an increased need for employment for unskilled workers. This is due to both unemployed people on various benefits returning to the labour market and increased numbers of migrant workers with the expansion of the EU.

- Nationally the number of over 50' s is forecast to grow by 36% by 2031. By 2026 the number of retirees in Cornwall is forecast to grow from 21% to 30%. This will mean employment opportunities for unskilled workers to provide not just care but services. Small businesses providing, gardening, window cleaning, decorating and DIY.
- The impact of broadband and future technology e.g Audio and video conferencing collaborative working with” virtual meetings” and knowledge based industries will mean that small business units are needed.(or perhaps larger homes with room for a home office.) These jobs will be high GVA.
- Caradon should review the provision of a Wi-max point on Caradon Hill to provide broad band to the surrounding villages.

Review of existing employment sites.

- Protect from alternative use and possibly limit future range of use (by class).
- Some existing estates need redevelopment in order to provide better use from land. Possible control of the use is required when this is done. There is a role for the local authority to plan and facilitate this.
- Sites to protect:

1. Cattle Market (see above)	A1, A3(?), B1(class II), D2
2. Existing Car Parks	retain, possibly incorporate B1
3. Luxstowe / Laity House	B1 (class II)
4. Trevillis Park (Hotel / Offices)	C1, C2, B1 (class II)
5. Morley Tamblyn Lodge	C1, C2, D1, D2, B1
6. Westbourne / Graylands / Pendean	B1 (class II)
7. Trewithen House	B1, C2, C3, D1
8. Liskerrett Centre	B1, A3, D1, D2
9. Liskeard Infants School	B1, D1, D2
10. All other schools and sports facilities/fields	B1, B8, D1, D2

New and redeveloped employment sites.

- Sufficient additional land must be allocated to provide for the needs of the growing local population. Some will be in the surrounding villages but the bulk will probably be in Liskeard.
- New sites chosen must be compatible with the local sites for housing in order to minimise the need for travel.
- Some new units should be 5000sq. ft. but will the ability to be linked if necessary. Generally businesses requiring larger than 5000sq. ft. prefer to buy the land and construct their own building. Presumably land should be zoned to allow for this.

- Overall there should be provision for a range of industrial buildings (we are relatively well off for small units but need ones for business to grow). There should also be provision for more intensive uses (offices etc) and there is a need to provide for emerging technologies that will create jobs with a high GVA. A small “science park” or at least a Hi-tech cluster.
- Sites to be protected but not requiring redevelopment:
 1. Miller Business Park
 2. Heathlands Business Park
 3. Clemo Road
 4. Holman Road / Quimperle Way

Sites to be protected and requiring redevelopment:

1. Moorswater
 2. Trevecca (and field behind adjacent units) - ideally should be limited to B1 uses.
 3. Enterprise Centre – ideally should be limited to B1 uses.
- New sites:
 1. With a large amount of new housing proposed to the north of the town, it is logical to seek further employment land in this area. It needs, however, relatively easy access to the national trunk road network and thus a further expansion in the Holman Road /Quimperle Way /Clemo Road would appear logical. It is therefore proposed that approximately 8.5Ha to the north of Pengover Road and running behind the Clemo Road site to the Callington Road be allocated.
 2. In addition, when the Trevacca site is redeveloped, opportunity should be taken to include the area behind the adjoining two employment sites. The proximity of this enlarged site close to the new housing between Coldstyle Road and Venslooe Hill makes it particularly suitable. It is also close to the Lux park Leisure Centre, providing nearby opportunities for people working there to participate in a Healthy Living programme.
 3. **Input is needed from the council to ensure that adequate land is allocated for the new sites.**

Tourism.

- Currently a small sector locally although more important to some of the surrounding villages.
- Now Caradon Hill is designated as a World Heritage Site there is an opportunity for Liskeard to provide the gateway to this . This means an expansion of tourist related services , Hotels, restaurants etc Good for locals although tourism tends to provide lower paid jobs.
- Looe Valley Line / Canal. Historic Town. Green Tourism.

Education, Training and Skills.

- Current problems with skills deficit and literacy / numeracy levels. We are not currently equipped to move into cutting edge areas although this is where future lies for small communities like ours.
- Address literacy / numeracy with schools / skills for life / etc through partnerships stimulated through LSP.
- Training more difficult as not much available locally and often access difficult by public transport. Need to identify what is needed (ongoing basis) and work with LSC.
- Issue of work placements / apprenticeships etc. Mostly small businesses locally and difficult for them to take on trainees as training a youngster reduces productivity of trainer.
- Initiate more technology training for example the new Moorswater site.
- **Advice is needed from the LSC both on the skills required and the training needed to provide these.**

Addendum 1. Further thoughts on education and skills.

State Education.

Pre-school and Primary:

There are a variety of commercially and voluntarily operated nursery and pre-school establishments.

Since the amalgamation of Liskeard Infants and Liskeard Junior schools, the town has two Primary Schools, Hillfort and St Martins. Both schools (or their predecessor establishments) rate around average in the performance tables for the county although the former Liskeard Junior school was slightly higher in the tables for “added value”. Land is allocated adjacent to the Callington Road roundabout for a further primary school if required although the Regional Spatial Strategy (Draft) indicates no significant rise in the numbers of school aged children. Many of the surrounding villages have their own primary schools.

Secondary:

The town and surrounding areas are served by Liskeard School and Community College, a large comprehensive designated as a specialist engineering school. Whilst rated well at 8th of 21 in Cornwall for the average university entrance points per student, the school does not fare as well for the percentage of students obtaining 5 or more A* to C GCSE passes inclusive of mathematics and English where it is only rated 30th of 35 (*this year's ratings = last year's results*)(Source DfE via newspapers). It also has the third highest truancy rate and a recent report raised issues of criminal damage.

However, statistics and league tables are far from being the entire story and results for a single year are not a reliable indication on which to make any judgement of future performance; significant changes are often seen between consecutive years or as a result in conscious changes in ethos, management or similar factors. There is no doubt though that these figures must be viewed as disappointing when the importance of schooling as a factor that families with children consider when making choices about where to live.

Tertiary:

Whilst University and Further Education (FE) facilities and opportunities in Plymouth are good and fairly easily accessible, neither exist in Liskeard. There are also FE establishments in Saltash and St Austell and at Duchy College near Stoke Climsland. The new Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) has a very limited presence in the east of the county but it is understood that this may change as it becomes more established.

Private education.

There are no independent schools in Liskeard or the immediately surrounding area although a range of both primary and secondary schools in the sector can be found in

Plymouth and are accessed by residents. A smaller number of children also attend independent schools in Truro.

Adult Education and Skills Training.

Opportunities for Adult Education exist within the town although these are primarily targeted at Adult Basic Education addressing literacy and numeracy problems in the area and at basic IT skills. A good range of evening classes is also on offer.

There is limited commercial provision of basic skills training although the majority of people seeking such courses look towards, Saltash, St Austell, Plymouth or even as far away as Camborne/Redruth. With a low-wage workforce and significant skills deficit, the demand for skills training should be high; indeed, there are indications from the business survey of this latent need. However, many people state in the survey that they “train their own”. There are three reasons for this:

- Lack of local provision
- Cost (in that, in addition to the cost of courses, people expect to be paid while training and, with no local provision, this places a burden on employers)
- Accessibility (of places where courses are run and of the correct type and level of training) – if it is in, say, Redruth, it is impossible for many to realistically get there in time for the start.

While many employers would accept the need for higher skill levels among their staff, the fragility and under-capitalisation of local business mitigates against the need being met.

There is thus a need for local provision of skills training but, for a town the size of Liskeard, this raises issues of the numbers that would wish to access any particular course and the consequent viability of the course itself. There is probably some form of critical mass below which local provision is not economic.