



Voluntary groups help plan the future

More than 120 representatives from voluntary and community groups from Leicester and Leicestershire attended a major conference to help plan the area's future.

The event is part of a programme to shape the Leicester Shire Economic Strategy for the next ten years.

Rick Moore, chair of LSEP, said: "It's very important that the private, public and third sector work together, and we are holding these consultation events to allow every sector to contribute. We recognise the huge job the third sector do, and this event gave us the chance to understand what they want and integrate it into our economic strategy."

Rachel Elliott, CEO of Ibstock Community Enterprises and an LSEP board member, said: "I think a key thing that emerged from this event was the importance of sustainable communities. For a community to be truly sustainable we need to be able to meet the

“For a community to be fully sustainable we need to be able to meet the needs of existing as well as future generations”

Kishor Tailor, chief executive of LSEP, said: "It is very important for us to understand what the voluntary sector wants from economic development, so it was good to be able to discuss how we deal with those issues with so many members of the sector."

needs of existing as well as future generations, which is important to recognise in shaping a ten-year strategy. I think it's important we take a holistic approach to economic development – sustainable communities are diverse and there is no one template to fit them all."



LSEP chief executive Kishor Tailor (front) and chairman Rick Moore (back) with board members Professor Shirley Pearce and Kevan Liles at the Leicester Shire Economic Strategy.

LSEP organised the event at Leicester Tigers, Welford Road, with Voluntary Action Leicester and with support from the Leicester Partnership and Leicestershire Together.

The event was one of several conferences designed to help LSEP create the economic strategy that will shape Leicester and Leicestershire's future over the next ten years for all organisations working locally.

£9 million boost for local economy

LSEP invested £9.2 million on programmes to develop the city and county economy in 2006/2007.

It financed 89 projects, ranging from helping growing businesses to finding work for people with disabilities.

The figures are published in LSEP's new annual report for 2006/2007.

The partnership brings together businesses and the public sector with voluntary and community groups to deliver the sub-regional economic strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire.

Interim chairman Martin Traynor, who handed over to new chairman Rick Moore in April, said: "We have successfully delivered against our business plan and have made significant progress in helping to grow the economy of both the city and county."

Chief executive Kishor Tailor said: "Our research shows consistent gains were made during the year on a number of fronts. The economy of Leicester and Leicestershire is developing well, and our challenge now is to continue that. I am confident that by continuing to work with our partners, we will succeed."



LSEP is supporting a £19m programme to improve the city centre's shopping streets.

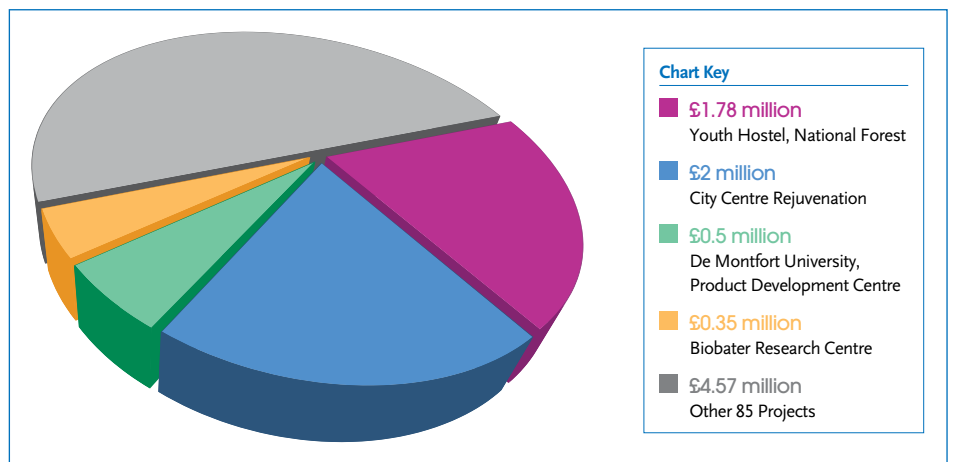
During 2006/2007, LSEP investments included:

- £2m to help transform the centre of Leicester to make it more attractive to investors, shoppers and visitors. The improvements are part of a £19m investment in the public realm to revitalise the city centre and build upon the opening of the £350m Shires extension which, with its anchor tenant John Lewis, will put Leicester in the premier league of visitor and shopping destinations.
- £0.5m support to De Montfort University (DMU) to launch a product development centre to help improve the performance of SMEs by offering advice on product design, in particular the application of new technology. The centre has been set up as a direct result of 'Improving Business By Design', a pilot project run by DMU and funded by LSEP.
- LSEP is spearheading work to attract government departments looking to relocate from London and the South East. LSEP is leading and coordinating the sub region's 'offer' by bringing together the collective resources of the key partner organisations locally. This is one illustration of the LSEP Board's commitment to take a lead in raising the profile of the sub region.
- £1.78m combined investment with *emda* to create a state of the art Youth Hostel in The National Forest to provide family friendly accommodation to people on a budget, encouraging longer stay visits (12,000 a year) to The National Forest and other local tourist attractions.
- £350,000 investment to establish a research centre (Biobater) with Leicester University to nurture early stage ventures arising from the University's research in bioscience and healthcare. The centre works closely with industry partners to identify projects which offer the greatest sustainable commercial potential.

Among other projects that have received funding highlighted in the annual report are:

- The ACE training programme to help people with disabilities return to work.
- The Melton Learning Hub teaching practical skills to adults and young people.
- The Moneyline scheme that provides loans for people to start new businesses.

Future projects include funding for a new Digital Media Centre in Belgrave, Leicester Science Park and Braunstone Enterprise Centre.



Twycross Zoo gets new welcome centre

Twycross Zoo has won its bid for a £3 million grant from East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) and LSEP for a new 2,391-square-metre visitor welcome centre.

This exciting building will speed up access to the zoo, provide new improved facilities and add the “wow factor” for visitors. The centre

is set to stimulate great interest and create a positive impact on the local economy by generating employment opportunities.

Kishor Tailor, chief executive of LSEP, said: “This is fantastic news for one of our great local assets. It will have a beneficial effect on tourism and employment.”

The project has been designed to be an attractive central feature within the zoo. With a low-level grass-roofed building, the centre will blend in with the natural surroundings.

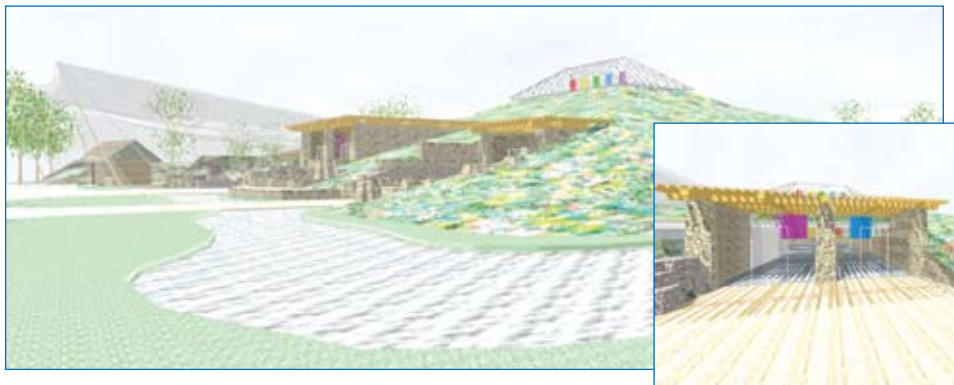
The building, which has been designed to be environmentally friendly, will significantly improve the zoo’s current facilities.

The new entrance will host the zoo information centre and a Tourist Information Centre, as the zoo is one of the “gateways to Leicester and Leicestershire”.

From the outset, this building has been designed to be environmentally green and sustainable. In its own right, it is intended to illustrate the importance of the conservation of the environment just as Twycross’ role relates to conservation of species. The design of the new building is BREEAM excellent. The BRE Environmental Assessment Method identifies practical measures that can be taken to plan sustainability into a development. It illustrates that sustainability has been systematically addressed in all aspects of the proposals.

Two boreholes are in progress, and if found to contain potable water, then the zoo will be almost self-sufficient.

This will truly be a world-class venue.



Food festival attracts 20,000 visitors

LSEP backed the East Midlands Food and Drink Festival, the largest regional food festival in the UK. LSEP co-funded the October event with Welland SSP and Melton Partnership.

This year, to enable the festival to accommodate an increasing number of visitors and exhibitors, it relocated to the historic Brooksby Hall near Melton Mowbray.

Over 200 exhibitors showcase the region’s finest foods, attracting more than 20,000 visitors. Top name celebrity chefs Jean Christophe Novelli (pictured on the right), Rachel Green and Clarissa Dickson Wright, along with many other top ranking regional chefs take part.

The theme for this year’s Festival is ‘Make it Local’. Visitors can see cheese being made, bread baked, pies raised, sausages linked, pasta pressed, chocolate tempered and a whole host of foods in the making.



Activities for children include an area where they can see traditional foods being made.

The main event is preceded by a ‘mini fest’ - the East Midlands Children’s Food Festival. Over 500 school children from a variety of schools spend the day seeing how local foods are made and trying some of the recipes for themselves.

Day in the sun at The National Forest Wood Fair

Record crowds flocked to The National Forest Wood Fair at Beacon Hill Country Park in Leicestershire on Bank Holiday Monday. The event is jointly organised by the National Forest Company and Leicestershire County Council with backing from LSEP and Derby & Derbyshire SSP. Over 3,000 people enjoyed one of the best days of the summer.

The field was packed with around 80 stands and demonstrators. There were woodcraft skills on show, plus the latest in modern timber technology.

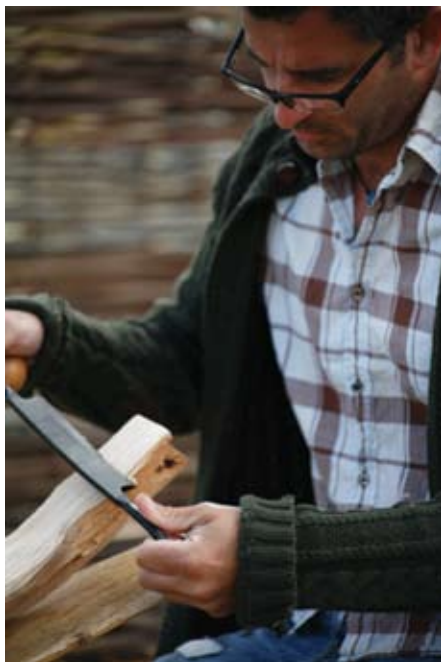
“This was a fabulous opportunity for the embryonic forest economy to display its wares, and we were pleased to be able to support it,” said Kishor Tailor, chief executive of LSEP.

Visitors watched whole tree trunks turned to logs in a matter of seconds and saw the care and precision needed to turn a chair leg on a pole lathe.

The Wild Man of the Woods explained how all can do their bit to look after the environment.

“This is a brilliant day,” commented one visitor from Markfield. “It makes you really think about the importance of wood again.”

Youngsters had a great day out. Wearing leather gauntlets they could feel the weight of an owl perched on their arm, they learnt



John Hollis of John's Rustic Furniture starts to create a chair leg at The National Forest Wood Fair.

bushcraft skills, they splashed about in a specially made pond, paddling a coracle from one side to the other and made tree decorations and fun clay figures of creatures that live in the woods.

Hugh Williams for The National Forest Company said: “We were delighted to see so many people at The National Forest Wood Fair. They were all very keen to have a good day out, to try lots of the activities on offer and buy woodland products. Many also found out more about The National Forest – why it is here, what happens to the trees and how they can get involved.”

Ernie White, Lead Member for Community Services at Leicestershire County Council,



Lea Torp-Nielson expertly carves a sculpture from a Yew tree stump at The National Forest Wood Fair.



Hand made dibbers were a popular purchase for many gardeners who attended the Wood Fair.

said: “The Wood Fair highlights the value and beauty of timber and demonstrates the importance of sustainable woodland management, both locally and globally.”

The National Forest area covers 200 square miles of the counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Its objective is to increase woodland cover within its boundaries from an initial six per cent to about a third. No multi-purpose forest on this scale has been created in the UK for 1,000 years. To date, the proportion of woodland cover for the Forest has already more than doubled to 17.5 per cent and 7 million trees have been planted.

“The Wood Fair highlights the value and beauty of timber and demonstrates the importance of sustainable woodland management, both locally and globally”

Leicester Shire Economic Partnership

Charnwood Court 5b New Walk Leicester LE1 6TE

t 0116 257 5699 f 0116 255 8661 e enquiries@lsep.co.uk www.lsep.co.uk

Registered in England No. 4536903, Registered Office 20 New Walk, Leicester.

 east midlands
development agency
the catalyst for change