



NEWS ARCHIVE for 2010

- **December 2010** Of the many rituals, three aspects of the new year tradition seem particularly relevant to the local government family as we leave 2010 and enter 2011. To read the original article, please click on the link to the right.
- **November 2010** In what is likely to be the last formal board meeting that I chair, [Luton Gateway](#) (development company) has reluctantly agreed to close. The demise of one of the smaller companies set up under the former 'Growth Area' approach is hardly unexpected, but the [circumstances around the closure decision are dramatic](#); and the future for the Luton conurbation achieving its ambitions coherently and cohesively seems highly challenging at best. I am tempted to write further on this, but please contact me if you want a more immediate discussion on the future options for arms-length specialist development bodies in advance of publication!...
- **November 2010** This month saw the launch of the Guardian's '[Local Government Network](#)' for which I am a member of the Advisory Panel. It will be interesting to see how the network develops and the niche it establishes for itself in the plethora of social networking sites, blogs etc. To date I have submitted a couple of short pieces about the state of play in the economic development landscape which you can read in the articles section; and I do hope the network picks up the development and regeneration agenda seriously. We need a national circulation broadsheet articulating a genuinely place-based development and regeneration message given the turmoil in the sector post Spending Review and White Paper.
- **October 2010** It was a pleasure to attend Anglian Water's '[love every drop](#)' event at Chesterton Research Park on 19th October. 'Love every drop' is a campaign by the water utility to raise awareness of the many crucial roles of 'water' in our achieving future social, economic and environmental ambitions. The event also showcased the launch of Anglian Water's 'manifesto' outlining the commitment of the company to contributing positively to sustainable growth and development. As one of the speakers commented, 'this is a very tangible corporate manifestation of what "Big Society" might mean'. Giving tangible meaning to the Big Society theme needs new thinking, certainly; but it may not require 'reinventing the wheel'. There is much good practice in public, private and voluntary sectors already going on.
- **October 2010** Perhaps the biggest surprise of the late summer has been the Eric Pickles 'coming out' as a '[man for all regions](#)', encouraging and supporting the new pan-Thames region embodied in the [Greater Essex-Kent 'super-LEP'](#). Read the opinion piece on the right, originally published in Local Government Chronicle.
- **September 2010** If government is truly serious about private sector employment growth driving our economy over the 2011-14 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period, it needs to match its concern for supporting SMEs with enabling '[SMCs](#)' (small and medium cities) to achieve their goals and ambitions. This case is argued in the

response of 'Regional Cities East' (RCE) to the [Regional Growth Fund](#) (RGF) consultation that closed on 6th September. 3LE was delighted to work with RCE (a partnership of Colchester, Ipswich, Luton, Norwich, Peterborough, Southend – six major urban drivers of the economy in the east of England) on formulating their RGF consultation response. 3LE is continuing to work with RCE in September and October on the impact of Local Enterprise Partnership proposals on SMCs. If any small and medium cities and their hinterlands wish to contribute to this exercise, please contact me at davidmarlow@thirdlifeeconomics.co.uk

- **August 2010** The 6th September this year will mark at least two significant milestones. There are those of us whose minds will turn to the 40th anniversary of Jimi Hendrix's last ever gig – at the Isle of Wight festival. And there are others who will breathe a long sigh of relief that we have finally met the government deadline and submitted our proposal for a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

LEPs are intended to be civic/business partnerships providing strategic economic leadership for 'real economic geographies'. Government's invitation to submit LEP proposals has sparked a huge flurry of activity by local authorities and business organisations. But much of this activity fails to clear a first hurdle of 'what our [real economic geography](#) actually is'. See the article written on the right...

- **July 2010** The government has reaffirmed the importance of [manufacturing](#) as a sector but, with BIS - the government department responsible for manufacturing, industrial strategy and private sector employment growth- taking amongst the highest budget cuts, local leadership teams need to learn a lot more about their manufacturing sector, its priorities for retention and growth if they are to support a 'new economy' for the future. Read the article on the right for more.
- **June 2010** In light of the emergency budget and recent announcements on the [abolition of RDAs](#), have a look at the two articles on the right...
- **May 2010** Amidst the uncertainties of the new government's intentions on sub-national policies and priorities, a number of fundamentals facing local, city and sub-regional leaders are very clear. Firstly, we do need to plan seriously for how we can re-stimulate growth and development in our areas post the recession; and, secondly, we are going to have to achieve this with much less public investment than might have been expected hitherto.

Third Life Economics' work with the [Institute for Manufacturing](#) (IfM) at Cambridge University to develop an "[Industrial Innovation Toolkit](#)" for local and sub-regional economies may be of considerable interest in this endeavour. We are seeking to work with a small cohort of interested areas on a collaborative project. This will assist leadership teams to identify and exploit underlying strengths and potential to develop globally-competitive knowledge-based high growth industry and related services in their area.

This "Special Interest Group" (SIG) will have the potential for both in situ exercises, action-learning across the group, and networking with, inter alia, IfM's contacts at the most senior levels of both public and private sectors. If you are interested in

participating in this exciting new initiative, please contact us at Third Life Economics. If you wish to hear more about it, you can listen to the podcast [here](#)

- **May 2010** A collaboration with the University of Cambridge Institute for Manufacturing (IfM) to produce an “Industrial Innovation Toolkit” for sub-regional and local economies will move forward apace during May. On May 18th, Third Life Economics will facilitate a session at an IfM Briefing Day with selected public sector partners, on how we can develop industrial policy, the “new economy”, and high growth sectors and technologies, at sub-region, city-region and local levels. This is intended to assist local authorities with the formulation of Local Economic Assessments and action plans arising from them. If you are interested in attending the briefing day, or indeed participating more broadly in this project, please feel free to get in touch.
- **April 2010** I am delighted to be working with SQW Consulting on supporting the development of an [Economic Strategy for Fylde Coast](#) and its new Economic Development Company (EDC). Anchored by Blackpool, Fylde Coast epitomises the challenges facing traditional UK seaside resorts. Thwarted in its ambitions to establish a large scale regional casino to catalyse a new visitor offer, Blackpool’s reinvention will now proceed in an era of very tight public investment. We will assist the EDC to understand the economic evidence base, build a public sector understanding of strategic choices, and mobilise private sector interest in market opportunities. Watch this space... I suspect, where Blackpool goes, other UK seaside resorts may follow.
- **April 2010** As we’ve seen throughout the political leaders’ debates, the country’s [security and defence](#) remains a key issue. Whichever way the election turns out, there will be a major strategic defence review over the coming 12-18 months. For Rutland, a sneak preview of what may result from the review has already been realised. Over the last few months, 3LE has been supporting the Rutland leadership team take stock of the impact of MoD’s decision to close RAF Cottesmore and transfer activity across the county’s and region’s border to RAF Wittering. Whilst decisions - and plans - are still evolving, the Council is working very closely with the MoD and other local and regional partners to plan and manage intervention at an early stage to mitigate the economic loss and impact on local and neighbouring communities. This is particularly challenging for the country’s smallest unitary given that it is currently home to two MoD bases and two prisons. RAF Cottesmore currently hosts around 8% of Rutland’s population and represents approximately 5% of the county’s GVA . In any rural area with defence establishments, this will be a very important issue over the coming period. The East Midlands region is already taking a lead and is looking more widely at the impact of MoD facilities and operations on the region’s economy.
- **March 2010** Total Place: a whole area approach to public services” was published alongside the Budget in March 2010, and probably contains enough of interest and relevance to continue to be read and progressed post-elections. Third Life Economics played an advisory role with the CLG/Treasury [“Economic Growth and Inclusion Task Force”](#) whose thoughts on how to connect Total Place with growth and regeneration are included in the report. We looked at simplifying regional structures, empowering functional economic areas in city regions/sub-regions, and moving MAAs, Total Place/Total Capital, and city region pilots to the next level of delivery. These “outcome” aspects were somewhat obscured by a more pervasive efficiency savings emphasis,

based on local authority boundaries. However, returns to growth post-election will need a focus on real economies pulled together at some sort of level beyond the local authority and below Whitehall. And without this return to growth, the prospect of resources available for regeneration and economic participation will be highly restricted and the opportunities frustrated.

- **March 2010** It was a real pleasure to facilitate, for the second year running, a session for [Ashridge Business School](#) and the [National School of Government](#) on their Leaders UK (LUK) programme. LUK is a major leadership development programme for senior public service managers. Through a highly interactive exercise that drew on the delegates own experience, we explored models and the practice of public/private collaboration, and developed understandings of the types of leadership attributes and management preconditions for successful joint working. I would like to think that (as I did) delegates got something out of the session – in which case it was a good example of public/private sector collaboration in its own right!
- **March 2010** March means [MIPIM](#) – the property development show in Cannes. It was interesting to attend and assess whether the development industry has pulled out of recession. My overall impression was of renewed confidence internationally, but a higher than average level of uncertainty in the UK market – at least partly connected to the impending general election. In meetings with UK colleagues (HCA, local authorities, development companies and the private sector), we discussed how to make the case for continuing public investment in regeneration through the Comprehensive Spending Review due later this year. A major theme is the need to get much better at linking areas and communities in need of regeneration to areas of growth and economic success. I am sure this is a theme to which 3LE will return with clients and partners over the coming period.
- **February 2010** With all three political parties in the run up to the general election professing a commitment to [localism](#) and decentralised decision-making, it is timely to consider whether the policy framework now exists to empower leaders of cities, towns and rural communities to create “successful places”. Two pieces of work this month have allowed Third Life Economics (3LE) to explore these issues with clients of very different scales and contexts. The first is with Cornwall County Council – one of the largest unitary councils in the country, leading a highly distinctive sub-region (Cornish colleagues might say ‘region’) with a strong cultural identity. We looked at the options for enhanced roles and functions to be devolved to Cornwall institutions. Within the remit of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act (i.e. the SNR implementation process), Cornwall potentially has a number of opportunities. The study looked at how mechanisms like Economic Prosperity Boards, Total Place/Total Capital, MAAs and other frameworks might contribute to a new Cornwall-led public policy prioritisation process.

At almost the other end of the scale is Hemel Hempstead - a town of around 90,000 north-west of London. Working with Dacorum Borough Council, 3LE looked at how to deliver a successful Hemel in a two tier local government structure (Dacorum is one of ten district councils in Hertfordshire) in an impending period of public finance austerity. Critical Success Factors include being able to join up the place-shaping, total place, and “one place”/CAA strands of public policy at the Hemel level; and thereafter assembling

the capacity and capability to plan and manage the changes necessary to deliver Hemel's success.

Cornwall and Hemel both demonstrate that, on paper, policy frameworks do exist that can progress the ambitions of local and sub-regional leaders. However, there are a lot of them, and joining these up is far from simple. Places will require both highly ambitious leadership and effective competent management if they are to be successful. And, as importantly, they will require the national political parties, post-elections, to proactively and enthusiastically put their commitment to localism into practice. The next six months will be interesting...

- **January 2010** Rutland County Council is the smallest unitary council in England, serving a population of under 40,000. During 2009, I was privileged to work both with the Council Cabinet and to facilitate a broader "Leadership Summit" comprising officers from Council, PCT, Police, Prisons, MoD., education sector, and private sector business. Both projects were essentially about building coherent and cohesive leadership of the county; and developing shared understanding of the major challenges Rutland faces. These interventions will be tested over the coming months. The closure of RAF Cottesmore was announced in mid-December. Arguably the largest employer in the county and home to up to 10% of its population, the impact of closure will be hugely significant for Rutland, a wider hinterland, and indeed the region. Third Life Economics will continue to work with the council and the broader leadership team over the coming months both to assess impact, mitigate negative consequences, and to realise any opportunities arising.