

Asset Development Case Study

PLANED www.planed.org.uk



About PLANED

Is a development trust and community led and owned organisation working with more than 80 communities throughout Pembrokeshire and undertaking integrated community development and regeneration. PLANED has a team of around 27 employees, a management board of 44 and an annual turnover of around £1.2 million.

It was initially set up as TCRI in 1987 and then established as SPARC in 1991 and later PLANED in Narberth. They have managed the Old School Site for the Welsh Development Agency since 1988 when the WDA purchased the site from the Local Authority following the closure of the school. The arrangement between PLANED and the WDA worked successfully with the site having an average occupancy rate of 85% even throughout the recession. All workshops are currently occupied.

Asset Base Programme

In 2002 the PLANED Board resolved to purchase from the WDA the workshops, thus giving the organisation a valuable asset base from which similar opportunities could develop in other communities throughout Pembrokeshire.

Units vary in size from 300 to 1500 sq.ft. The small units are seen as start up or incubator units and tenants are offered 'easy in easy out' tenancy agreements. This is particularly appealing in encouraging new businesses.

The range of businesses on site include PLANED's own offices, a dental technician, a community radio station, master upholstery, picture framing and model making. A total of 60+ individuals are employed on the site.

PLANED Board agreed to purchase the site over 2 years through accessing a £100K Community Loan from Finance Wales and a PLANED loan, together with accumulative rental income, in order to give PLANED an appreciating asset base.

Benefits

- Purchase of redundant secondary school 2004 by PLANED from WDA.
- Redundant secondary school converted into business units owned and managed by PLANED with easy access to business advice.
- 4 new workshops built on the old school site in the style of the original buildings, making a total of 19 small workshops.
- Currently approx 60 jobs with 100% occupancy of units.
- Profits support PLANED to undertake community regeneration in Pembrokeshire.
- PLANED owns and manages 19 managed workshops on the refurbished Old School site, Station Road, Narberth.

A Shaping our Futures project helps local people to develop and implement Local Action Plans socially, economically and environmentally. A Sustainability Tool is being developed to help communities to design sustainable projects with funding from the Carnegie Trust and in conjunction with the New Economics Foundation.

The Sense of Place project – Encouraging and supporting local people to interpret and celebrate their heritage.

Valuing the Environment - provides everyone with the opportunity to become more involved with protecting and enhancing Pembrokeshire's environment for future generations.

LEADER+

Through Creating a Culture of Entrepreneurship, PLANED aims to strengthen the local economy by helping communities identify new opportunities based on local resources. PLANED is supporting the development of local business groups and special interest groups, eg. growers, festivals and events and local products.

Supporting sustainable agriculture - supports farming families in Pembrokeshire in identifying new farm based and off-farm opportunities, particularly linked to sustainable agriculture.

As a facilitator for Farming Connect, PLANED assists farmers with access to their services and everyday inquiries. Interpretation, access and sustainable tourism, marketing and sales through Greenways Holidays.

Lessons Learned

- Build on existing local resources and capacities.
- Mobilise all sectors of the community.
- Develop the social infrastructure.
- Provide institutional capacity.
- Ensure a generative environment for private enterprise, tailor and locally deliver integrated business support.

- Develop partnerships between public agencies and local communities.
- Allow for differentiation and specialisation.
- Recognise the importance of a holistic approach to regeneration.

Separation between economic, community and environmental interests are minimised. There is a need for an integrated approach - working together rather than cutting across one another. Changes in the rural economy are closely connected to social and cultural development. They shape the natural ecology and environment.

There is an ongoing commitment to locally owned structures and processes with people supported to work together, building on their strengths through training, awareness raising and capacity building.

Integrated development support is made at the most effective level and the key complementary factors of partnership, integration and sustainability are developed together. Contributions to be made by different sectors and tiers from government to local level are recognised.

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