

THIRSK REGENERATION INITIATIVE

DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

2005 – 2010

Prepared by

David Potts Associates

December 2004



Thirsk
Regeneration Initiative

THIRSK REGENERATION INITIATIVE

BUSINESS PLAN

CONTENTS:

	Page
Executive Summary	3
1 Background to Thirsk Regeneration Initiative (TRI)	5
2 The Mission	7
3 Thirsk – The nature of the community	8
4 The Future areas of work and potential activity for TRI	9
5 Marketing, Promotion and Communications	14
6 Resources and Financial Objectives	16
7 SWOT Analysis	18
8 Organisation Structure	20
9 Development Action Plan and Timescales	23

Appendix

i Current membership of the Thirsk Regeneration Initiative Committee	
ii Projects delivered by Thirsk Regeneration Initiative to date	
iii Project ideas and status from local consultation exercise	

THIRSK REGENERATION INITIATIVE

BUSINESS PLAN

Executive Summary

Thirsk Regeneration Initiative (TRI) was formed in August 2001 as the partnership and delivery body for the local Market Towns Initiative (MTI) programme. MTI was a pilot programme of 12 towns jointly promoted by Yorkshire Forward and the Countryside Agency, and Thirsk was selected as a participant in the second round of market towns.

External consultants undertook local consultations and drafted a 'Healthcheck' and Action Plan for Thirsk. The task for TRI was to develop a programme of projects that would fit with the MTI criteria, secure match funding, and deliver and manage those projects to a successful completion by the end of March 2005.

To support their work, TRI had the services of a local MTI Manager, fully funded by Yorkshire Forward, who was responsible for the day to day progress of the work programme.

Delivery has been successful. Over 20 local projects have been completed. This includes supporting the establishment of The Thirsk Clock, a local drop in and education centre for young people, the East Thirsk Learning Resource Centre, Thirsk Festival, the Ritz Cinema, Thirsk Community Forest and the relocation of the Tourist Information Centre. Additionally a number of small projects received modest grants that enabled these ideas to be developed and expanded.

TRI has established a good local reputation for working on behalf of a wide range of organisations and issues. Additionally it has worked at developing strong working relationships with the private sector, the local authorities and voluntary and community groups.

In the summer of 2004 the group began to think about future work and sustainability and established a small working party from its main committee to explore options. This took the form of undertaking a large-scale local consultation exercise to bring forward further project ideas and to seek a mandate for TRI to continue its work. The resulting Action Plan for Thirsk covering the next five years has recently been drafted.

TRI has also explored how it might structure itself to deliver projects in the future. It has decided at this time to remain as an unincorporated body but will review this position from time to time. The preference currently is to ensure that resources and effort are directed at delivering further improvements to the quality of life for the people of Thirsk and the surrounding villages.

This Business Plan however helps to set part of the agenda for the future work of the organisation as it moves into the next phase of its work. A key task will be to secure resources, particularly the services of a paid officer, to ensure that day to day delivery is maintained.

This Business Plan sets out the future project work for TRI, the initiatives to support improved communications, a SWOT analysis and some ideas for future organisation structures. The TRI Management Committee is well led, has demonstrated a good track record in delivering a successful MTI programme, and is a coherent group that demonstrates stability and an ability to work collaboratively and with a consensus approach.

THIRSK REGENERATION INITIATIVE BUSINESS PLAN

1 Background to Thirsk Regeneration Initiative

1.1 What is the Thirsk regeneration initiative? (TRI)

- 1.1.1 In 2000 Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency for Yorkshire and Humber, in partnership with the Countryside Agency, launched a pilot programme to test out how support could be given to the market towns in the region.
- 1.1.2 In total 12 towns were selected to take part in the three year Market Towns Initiative (MTI) programme and Thirsk was included in round two of this process.
- 1.1.3 A fund of £340,000 was made available to the town to be used to deliver an agreed Action Plan and set of projects. The programme was to run until March 2005.
- 1.1.4 The Thirsk Regeneration Initiative (TRI) Committee was established in August 2001. It is made up of local people, local agencies and representatives from County, District and Town Councils. Its job is to deliver the MTI Action Plan for Thirsk – ‘Think Thirsk First’ and complete the implementation of the portfolio of projects in the Plan. The current membership of the TRI Committee is given at appendix i.
- 1.1.5 TRI has been successful and by March 2005 it will have completed this first phase of its work.

1.2 The story so far

- 1.2.1 Following the establishment of the TRI Committee in August 2001, external consultants supported a large scale consultation exercise in the town and also in the surrounding parishes and settlements.
- 1.2.2 This so called town ‘Healthcheck’ provided information as to the most important local issues as seen through the eyes of local people. A themed approach was enabled by the formation of Focus Groups that each took a particular topic to develop.
- 1.2.3 These issues were then drafted into an Action Plan and a portfolio of projects produced.
- 1.2.4 At that time the nature of the funding from Yorkshire Forward and the criteria for project support meant that projects had a distinct ‘economic’ flavour and were often linked to employment and training. There was also a requirement to find additional funding to ‘match’ with the Yorkshire Forward cash to deliver each project.
- 1.2.5 A project manager was appointed in April 2002, reporting to the TRI Committee, to handle the day to day progress chasing for projects and ensure the smooth running of the programme.

- 1.2.6 To date over 20 local projects have been undertaken; some are complete, others will conclude by March 2005. A list is provided at appendix ii
- 1.2.7 In addition to the £340,000 grant fund, TRI has brought in over £650,000 in additional match funding contributing to £1m of regeneration improvements being made in Thirsk and district during the lifetime of the programme.
- 1.2.8 With strong support from all three local authorities and other partners, TRI will have successfully delivered the agreed MTI programme for Thirsk by March 2005. For those involved in this process it has often been a steep learning curve. Many are volunteers and give their time to this work. Having gained this valuable experience and recognising that there is still work to do, TRI have undertaken extensive further local consultation to bring forward a new Action Plan for the next 3 – 5 years
- 1.2.9 In order to deliver this new programme of work, TRI has drafted this Business Plan to shape its own approach to the task.

2 The Mission

2.1 The Mission Statement

The Thirsk Regeneration Initiative will enable, support and facilitate the economic, social, environmental and cultural regeneration of Thirsk and District through ensuring the effective delivery of the current Action Plan – ‘Think Thirsk First’. This includes maintaining a strong presence within the local community, lobbying on regeneration issues, developing partnerships and where gaps and unmet needs are identified, initiating appropriate action within its areas of influence.

2.2 Aims

The primary aims of TRI are:

- 2.2.1 To maintain existing and develop new links with all sectors of Thirsk and District communities to ensure that local views, needs and aspirations are effectively represented within a dynamic Action Plan for the town and surrounding parishes.
- 2.2.2 To be the local conduit through which a two way dialogue can be maintained that communicates to and from the Local Strategic Partnership both on matters of community planning and wider issues of local importance and interest.
- 2.2.3 To develop and maintain a close and strong working relationship with local and regional agencies and authorities to ensure that opportunities to maximise the regeneration potential for Thirsk and District are realised.
- 2.2.4 To ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that the organisation remains relevant, open and representative with strong local governance and continues to reflect the diversity of local communities and articulate the consensus view.

2.3 Objectives

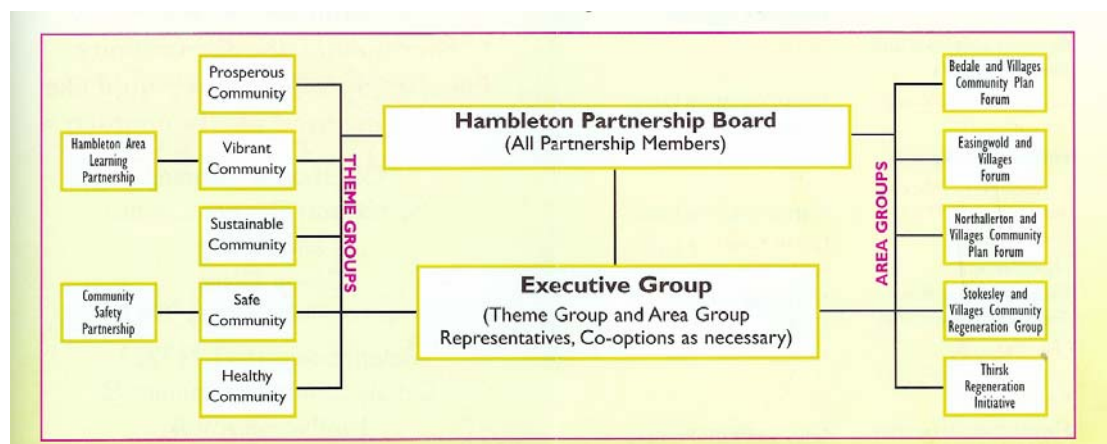
The primary objectives of TRI are:

- 2.3.1 Delivery of the consensus vision for Thirsk and District through the agreed Action Plan.
- 2.3.2 Delivering the projects in the Action Plan and where appropriate identifying and securing project funding.
- 2.3.2 Active communication and dissemination of views, issues, plans and actions that impact upon the people of Thirsk and District and the delivery of their Action Plan.
- 2.3.3 Promoting networking and the formation of delivery partnerships that achieve change on the ground in line with the Action Plan and improve the quality of life for local people in a sustainable way.
- 2.3.4 Assessment of the effectiveness of the organisation and its continuing value to the community.

3 Thirsk – The nature of the community

- 3.1 Thirsk is one of the five key market towns in Hambleton District within the County of North Yorkshire. The town and its catchment area has a population of about 18,000. The town centre conurbation is formed from the two adjoining parishes of Thirsk and Sowerby, each having its own town and parish council respectively. There are over 25 outlying parishes that look to the town as their service centre.
- 3.2 The market town of Thirsk lies in the centre of Hambleton District on the edge of the plain of York and adjoining the North York Moors national Park. Its location in the A1/A19 corridor provides for excellent strategic communication links for business, commuting and tourism potential.
- 3.3 At its core, Thirsk has an attractive Market Place that is the hub for the town providing attractive facades to the built environment, a traditional street market, transport connections and free car parking for locals and visitors.
- 3.4 Through the community planning process, Hambleton has ensured that each of its five market towns is included in the Local Strategic Partnership framework. In relation to Thirsk and district, it is Thirsk Regeneration Initiative that plays this key role as one of the recognised area groups. The following structure diagram shows this framework.

Hambleton Strategic Partnership structure



Reproduced from Hambleton Strategic Partnership literature

4 The Future areas of work and potential activity for TRI

4.1 The public consultations initiated by TRI and undertaken between August and October 2004 indicated the key areas for future action identified by local people. The consultation process also enabled prioritisation of these potential actions. The full listing of project ideas and priority status is given at appendix iii. This forms the basis for The Action Plan for Thirsk and District¹ that will guide local regeneration activity over the next five years.

4.2 The content of the Action Plan is integrated but has a broad spectrum of content. Accordingly development of some of the project ideas will rest with a number of specific local organisations that will take a lead on actual delivery. Analysis of the Action Plan suggests that it would be appropriate for TRI to take the lead role on project development in a number of key areas and these are described below. Additionally two cross-cutting themes will be integrated into the work of TRI. They are:

- Ensuring that social and community interests and projects are incorporated into the overall activity of the organisation;
- That the implications of any projects are assessed in relation to their potential impact on the hinterland and surrounding village communities.

4.3 The six primary theme areas that have been identified for TRI action are;

- Training and Employment
- Parishes and Hinterland (Thirsk and District)
- Tourism
- Physical Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Communications

4.4 These may be broken down into sub-sets and the particular market failure areas associated with each identified and linked to potential actions. Additional information has been drawn from two current local studies commissioned by Hambleton District Council and that at the time of writing were not in the public domain.²

4.4.1 Training and Employment

Sub themes	Market failure	Action
Young people	Local access to training provision is inadequate.	Develop links with area based training providers and seek innovative methods of delivery and location that match the identified needs of young people and local employers. Supporting career development initiatives through local schools.

¹ The Action Plan for Thirsk and District– December 2004

² Economic Development Study and the Town Centres Study both for HDC – Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners November 2004

Developing high value skills	Recent surveys indicate a skills gap in the local labour market in relation to higher value and trade skills.	Identify more precisely the areas of recruitment difficulty for local employers and link with area based training providers.
Retaining/attracting back young graduates to work in the area.	Thirsk and District is an unattractive area for recent graduates and is unable to offer the calibre/type of jobs they seek at an appropriate level of remuneration.	With local schools undertake a follow up study of recent students who have undertaken tertiary education and determine their work patterns and reasons for their actions. Gain an understanding of how graduates view Thirsk.

4.4.2 Parishes and Hinterland (Thirsk & District)

Sub themes	Market failure	Action
Facilitating and bridging relationships between parishes and Parish Councils and Thirsk Market Town as a rural hub.	Hinterland population are not inclined to visit Thirsk to access services, retail and leisure facilities such that cash leaks to other centres and places.	Form a relationship with parishes and Parish Councils. Working with the emerging Business Association seek to promote Thirsk based services and facilities specifically to outlying parishes.
Developing physical links between outlying parishes and the town such as footpaths, cycleways and 'green lanes'.	The hinterland population are more likely to use private transport to access services and facilities and consequently will often drive to other centres in preference to Thirsk.	Encourage non car based journeys into Thirsk and also promote more effective integrated public transport links between parishes and the town.

4.4.3 Tourism

Sub themes	Market failure	Action
There is a need to understand better the nature of the tourism offer based upon Thirsk and its hinterland.	There are perceived conflicts between Thirsk as a 'heritage centre' attraction and a 'modern town centre' as a retail and leisure destination.	Working with the Tourism section from HDC, undertake a specific tourism study for Thirsk and District. The development of an integrated plan that takes account of the wider district and regional picture, but enables coherent local action to support and promote the local tourism strategy.

<p>There is a need to provide more clarity in relation to who undertakes the co-ordinating and enabling roles with regard to tourism.</p>	<p>There are a number of local initiatives that contribute significantly to the tourism potential of the town and its hinterland. The lack of overall direction and integration fails to capitalise on this potential.</p>	<p>Working with the key local tourism stakeholders, including those from outlying parishes, develop an integrated approach to the tourism offer and establish organisational roles in relation to co-ordination and enabling opportunities.</p>
---	--	---

4.4.4 Physical Infrastructure

Sub themes	Market failure	Action
<p>Explore the opportunity to acquire the former Thirsk Police Station for re-use as some form of community resource.</p>	<p>The sustainability of TRI is uncertain without clear identification of future funding sources that can at least maintain an office base and a paid post. There are a number of local unmet needs ranging from community organisations seeking an office base to the lack of commercial office space for small businesses.</p>	<p>Working singly or in partnership, seek adequate funding to acquire and re-order the building based upon an identified business plan that creates some form of community asset and that can be sustained over time.</p>
<p>Enhance the gateway sites into Thirsk town centre as part of an integrated plan to improve overall public space such as to be attractive to local and visitor alike.</p> <p>Also opportunities for general enhancement of the public realm.</p>	<p>Unattractive public realm gateways are a disincentive to passing/potential visitors and local people to stop and shop.</p>	<p>Working with local environmental and civic groups and the appropriate Town and Parish Councils, undertake a coherent and integrated plan of action to create and maintain attractive gateway features to the town. This can integrate with more general public realm actions.</p>
<p>The introduction of 'public arts' projects into the town.</p>	<p>Thirsk has a pool of local artists/craftspeople who are a 'hidden' community and asset. Other local towns have achieved success in attracting visitors through local public arts projects and there is a need to remain competitive in this area.</p>	<p>Responding to calls for 'public arts' projects, explore opportunities to commission, using local skills where possible, works of public art and appropriate sites for their location. There is strong potential to link with the gateway project initiative.</p>
<p>Explore the way in which the local interest in developing an 'Artist's Quarter' around the area of the Old Courthouse and</p>	<p>Addressing the opportunity to exploit the adjacent development of two arts based initiatives and create something that</p>	<p>Working with RANY and the Ritz Cinema take forward the idea by discussing options and opportunities with others</p>

the Ritz Cinema can be taken forward	would be unique within Hambleton market towns.	currently located in this area and devise an overall plan for action. Link this with information and any planning that emerges from the current HDC Town Centres Study.
--------------------------------------	--	--

4.4.5 Economic Development

Sub themes	Market failure	Action
Stimulation of enterprise and social enterprise (including for TRI itself)	There is a strong tradition of enterprise and a self-employment culture in the Thirsk and District area. Particular areas to be addressed are the local low wage economy and youth unemployment. The future sustainability of TRI may not be achieved without linking to some form of social enterprise.	Working with key partners provide a proactive service that stimulates and supports initial interest in enterprise and social enterprise and is able to signpost on to specialist agencies where appropriate.
Identification and development of workspace suitable for small, starter enterprises. This may have potential as an asset base for TRI itself.	Recent town centre studies indicate demand for small workshop and office space that currently would be difficult to find. Without the release of such space the local opportunity for entrepreneurial activity may be limited or driven to seek space out of the area.	Maintaining links with the sector to be up to date on current needs while working with landowners, landlords and developers to identify suitable workspace opportunities. Retain an awareness with regard to any opportunities for TRI itself to develop an asset base.
Linking the aspirations for training and employment development above with the sub themes within the economic development strand.	Ensuring a coherent approach in relation to training, skills, jobs and workspace opportunity.	Networking with key stakeholders as appropriate and taking an enabling and facilitating role.
Linking the aspirations for an 'Artist's Quarter' above with the sub themes within the economic development strand.	Ensuring that the economic opportunities and potential are realised.	Joining this activity to both economic activity and tourism and leisure potential.
The developing use of IT activity and solutions for economic development.	Many local organisations and businesses have yet to embrace or develop the economic potential created by IT, Broadband and Internet technology.	Lead on exploiting the use of IT to develop business competitiveness and support developing markets and expanding customer bases for services , products and leisure activities.

4.4.6 Communications

Sub themes	Market failure	Action
<p>The need for a range of people, organisations and agencies to know what is planned and what is happening in Thirsk and District.</p>	<p>There is a large body of activity being delivered by a wide range of organisations, agencies and community groups all aiming to address needs of local people. There is currently no specific mechanism to ensure that similar activity can be combined, services are not duplicated or gaps prevented. There is no single place to go to deposit or access information on local events, meetings and activities.</p>	<p>Develop a simple local communications strategy and action plan to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Thirsk and District web site/portal; • A Citizens Panel that is a two way conduit for information; • A newsletter style of communication linked also to the web/portal; • TRI organisationally to lead on developing their own printed communication for wider community benefit.

5 Marketing, Promotion and Communications

- 5.1 The way in which TRI was formed and subsequently undertook the delivery of the Market Towns Initiative in Thirsk has seen an intense programme of activity. The need was for an Action Plan to be devised, projects to be worked up in detail, match funding secured, projects delivered and grant spent all within the space of three years. This proved a challenging task and timescale for the group, particularly when recognising the steep learning curve required of the predominantly volunteer body.
- 5.2 On reflection, as the programme enters its concluding months, review of the way in which the group communicated its work more widely to the community has shown that more could and should have been done.
- 5.3 Accordingly TRI has launched its own newsletter, TRIBune, and produced two editions that have highlighted its achievements in the successful delivery of MTI projects. It has also provided information in relation to local consultations and the TRI succession strategy and an invitation to the recent Annual General Meeting. Delivery has been to over 7,000 homes in Thirsk and the surrounding parishes.
- 5.4 The MTI programme was also instrumental in enabling Thirsk to be one of the first rural areas in North Yorkshire to be able to access Broadband facilities.
- 5.5 TRI will now devise and adopt a marketing and communication plan that will include:
- The production and regular district wide distribution of TRIBune;
 - The design and formation of a web site/portal for Thirsk that will include updated and current information on the work of TRI and local regeneration projects
 - Developing and improving communications by establishing a local 'Citizens Panel'³ through which regular channels of contact will be opened and maintained. This will be a two way conduit, not only for TRI purposes, but also to inform local community planning processes and be an effective mechanism for feedback.
 - Links with other agencies and community based organisations that produce newsletters and other forms of communication to explore the benefits of centralising information dissemination and joint methods of communication.
- 5.6 This will enable TRI to maintain contact with the community and report on progress in relation to project delivery and overall performance against the Thirsk Action Plan. It will also enable local views from the grass roots to be fed up and into the community planning framework.
- 5.7 TRI are also keen to be able to review and evaluate their own performance in relation to the mission, aims and objectives they have set for the organisation. Specifically this will be done through detailed enquiry via the 'Citizen's Panel'

³ The Citizens Panel will specifically address communications with non-traditional and hard to reach groups, smaller organisations currently with little or no voice as well as being used as a mechanism to engage with the wider community and other local fora.

at strategic times throughout the lifecycle of the current Action Plan. They may also look to establishing a system of 'Social Auditing'⁴ that will carry wider impact and create an agenda for organisational review and potential change.

⁴ Social Auditing is a process through which an organisation monitors and evaluates its work, reports honestly on its achievements and failings and improves its performance through more informed planning and better management.

6 Resources and Financial Objectives

- 6.1 For the duration of the MTI programme, a range of resources have been provided by external agencies designed to support the local delivery of the programme. The key components are:
- The salary and on-costs for the Thirsk MTI Manager post have been met by Yorkshire Forward and funded as additional to the MTI grant allocation of £340,000 that each market town received.
 - Town centre premises have been provided by HDC at an affordable economic rental level as an office base for the MTI programme.
 - Rent and rates for these premises have been met from the Thirsk MTI grant allocation.
 - Office running costs, heat, light, power and telephone expenses have also been met from the MTI grant.
 - General administration costs for the project and travel expenses for the MTI Manger have been met from the same source.
- 6.2 It is felt strongly that having a dedicated MTI Manager responsible to TRI for the delivery of the programme in Thirsk has been an essential component of the work and contributed significantly to the overall success in the town. Additionally, having a recognised town centre office location has enabled MTI to achieve a strong local profile and to be accessible to the general public as well as agencies and local community groups.
- 6.3 It has also been very beneficial to have access to a small fund that supports general administration and enables the smooth day to day running of the project.
- 6.4 Accordingly these are seen as essential components of the future work of TRI and resources need to be identified to achieve this aspiration.

6.5 Current costs

The outline current core costs of running TRI locally are assessed as:

Officer post salary	£28,000	Based upon 2003/4 figures
Employment on costs	4,200	Based upon 15% of salary
Rent	2,000	Current office space rental
Business rates	1,000	2004 basis
Heat, Light, Power	1,000	2004 basis
Telephone	1,000	estimated
Staff travel	2,000	estimated
Administration costs: Consumables/consultation/ printing	7,000	
Total	£46,200	

- 6.6 Discussions are currently taking place with HDC in relation to one possible option. This is based upon establishing a Hambleton wide 'Implementation and Delivery Team' responsible for servicing the three market towns of Thirsk, Northallerton and Bedale that are currently engaged in renaissance activity. It is also suggested that if such a team is established then the Thirsk office could be a suitable base for this group. Negotiations are taking place between HDC and potential sources of funding to support this option.
- 6.7 Independently TRI are also exploring an option to secure private sector support for resources to support their own officer post. To date some £6,000 per annum over three years has been pledged for this purpose. There may be a possibility to combine both options.
- 6.8 A third option to explore ways of generating an income stream to support core costs through developing an asset base or developing a social enterprise has been set aside at this stage but remains an option for the future.

6.9 Financial Objectives

- 6.9.1 There is currently a very strong view within the TRI Management Group that they wish to focus on building upon the successful project delivery achieved through the MTI programme in the town. Therefore consideration of engaging in activity that potentially will deflect attention and energy away from this aim is not seen as a current priority, although not discounted for the future.
- 6.9.2 Accordingly the chief financial objectives for the organisation are to secure through means other than their own enterprise, resources that will replicate the current arrangements for officer and office facilities.
- 6.9.3 At this time that rests with the opportunity for inclusion in the wider Hambleton team initiative with some potential, as yet to be fully explored, to raise short-term private sector cash specifically to support an officer post.
- 6.9.4 The Group understand that a strong element of dependence is inherent within this arrangement but that a move towards a more independent structure and set of arrangements may be possible in the future. It is important that the group have an overall level of comfort with these arrangements in terms of both capacity and aspiration. This is the present position.

7 SWOT Analysis

As part of the recent consultation exercise, local views about the performance of TRI and the way in which they have delivered the three year MTI programme in Thirsk has been addressed.

- 7.1 Overall the responses have indicated that the MTI has delivered some important good quality projects and addressed some of the key local concerns. It has been successful in drawing in additional external cash resources that when combined with the Yorkshire Forward MTI grant has amounted to spend of well over one million pounds. This has more than achieved the overall financial objectives set initially by the MTI programme when it was devised.
- 7.2 As part of the succession planning process, the TRI management group have also engaged in a review of their work and the organisation structure.
- 7.3 From all sources the following table identifies the most important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to the organisation.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has demonstrated a sound track record in project delivery of both large and small scale initiatives. • Thirsk has gained some new measure of status in the eyes of local people through successful delivery of MTI by TRI. • The TRI group attracted a good mix of public, private and community sector representation and have worked well as a team. • Demonstration that local people can influence and effect local change. • Has demonstrated the impact that a facilitating and lobbying body can have in joining up and delivering local initiatives. • Has demonstrated leadership in preparing and beginning to deliver a 'Vision for Thirsk'. • Having a wide community base enables TRI to act as a local forum for views, ideas and issues that can be passed on to others. • The organisation has demonstrated and is recognised as having no political bias or direction in its work. • The organisation is prepared to learn from its work and experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirsk is a small place and there are a finite number of people willing to get involved in 'civic' activity. • There has been a reliance on external sources of funding to provide the key ingredients for a successful organisation. • The Focus Group structure that had a role to play initially, now has little or no work to undertake. • TRI has not addressed the need to have an on-going communications plan to ensure that the wider community is constantly in touch with what it is doing and how it is delivering the Action Plan. • More work is required to ensure that TRI is inclusive in its work and project delivery and that marginalised groups are proactively brought into its work. • In particular, engagement with the farming community. • Stronger and proactive links with the rural parishes and Parish Councils.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local opinion supports the continuation of TRI in some form beyond the end of the MTI programme. • The knowledge and success of securing match funding brings further opportunities to engage with a range of funders to support future projects. • TRI has shown through the MTI programme that this way of working can attract new people and groups to engage in community based activity. • TRI geographically covers Thirsk and District (the hinterland) that is an area not collectively served by other bodies. • Is an integral part of the community planning framework and has established a solid working relationship with HDC and Thirsk Town Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing TRI group members will find that energy and time commitments outstrip availability to address the work load required beyond the relatively 'sheltered' environment of the MTI programme. • Existing members of the group who hold key posts and play important roles may leave. • The nature of external regeneration programmes and funders suggests that agencies can and do change the goalposts, sometimes with little warning or consultation. • There is a growing multiplicity of strong community based organisations in Thirsk, some of whom may be potential competitors for TRI.

7.4 In comparison with other MTI pilot town participants, Thirsk has performed well. It has delivered the key projects identified in the Action Plan, achieved leverage of match funding in line with programme requirements and assembled and developed an efficient partnership to oversee the programme delivery. It has also begun to debate and develop its succession strategy and is well placed to fit within the emerging District wide market town delivery mechanism that brings together both an MTI participant town and the two Renaissance Market Town (RMT)⁵ locations.

7.5 This Business Plan sets a major part of the future agenda for TRI as it begins the next phase of its work. As there is greater clarity about future resources it will begin to exploit further the strengths and opportunities it has created and identified while also seeking to minimise the impact of the perceived threats and weaknesses.

⁵ RMT is the roll out renaissance programme developed by Yorkshire Forward from the MTI pilot programme.

8 Organisation Structure

8.1 The TRI Management Group met regularly over a period of three months to undertake some facilitated sessions that have enabled them to debate and examine options for an appropriate organisation structure for the future. This created an opportunity to review past performance in relation to MTI delivery, benefit from large scale local public consultations and set their future plans into the wider local frameworks and context.

8.2 A number of organisation structure options have been discussed. These are:

- To remain as an unincorporated association and operate in much the same way as currently;
- To consider incorporation into a company limited by guarantee;
- To consider becoming a development/community trust

And also giving consideration to:

- Being dependent upon the local authority (ies)
- Revenue generation through developing an asset base/community enterprise
- Charitable status

8.3 Overall to recognise that whatever structure option is selected then there are two primary considerations in making that decision:

- The consensus and overall comfort of the group to secure a structure that meets current needs;
- That whatever structure is decided upon, it is always open to review in the future and that from time to time the position will be revisited and reassessed and also if appropriate, when an opportunity of some interest arises that suggests or requires a different structure.

8.4 The following table presents an analysis of the three options above:

Option	Benefits	Risks
<i>To remain as an unincorporated association</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little change to the current way of working, • The governing document (constitution) of the organisation is easily drafted and changed • Simple basic structure and inexpensive to run • Free from external regulation • Requires little capacity from governing body to run and manage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlimited, joint and several, personal liability for governing body; • No regulatory statute • Is not suitable for business purposes • May not convey right level of credibility to funders

<p><i>Incorporation (say) as a company limited by guarantee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited liability for members • Establishes a legal personality making property and contracts easier to handle • Clear statutory rights, relationships and rules • Very flexible constitutionally; • Easy to amend 'Mem & Arts' • Being a familiar legal form gives external confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up and running costs • Jurisdiction, regulation and penalties • Onerous administrative requirements • Loss of privacy • Capacity of group to manage a company • Open to external influences and diversion from core values/objectives
<p><i>Becoming a development or community trust</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision likely to be on the basis of having decided upon incorporation first; • A recognised community regeneration structure with a growing number established in UK • A national support team – Development Trusts Association with a regional structure. • Regional networking events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ties the organisation to a certain core set of values • Annual membership fees

8.5 In discussion, the group are currently minded to remain as they are within an unincorporated association and have undertaken to review their existing constitution. This may help to define more clearly who are the members of TRI and the relationship they have with the Management Committee.

8.6 On review TRI are happy to continue their relationship with HDC and in many ways, remain reliant upon the local authority to secure resources for their future. There is not a will at this time to pursue specifically any form of community enterprise that may have potential for revenue/income generation that could contribute to core costs. It is felt that this will serve to detract and distract from the main purpose of the organisation, that is project delivery.

8.7 However some approaches to the private sector have been successful in generating some pledges of financial support, primarily in relation to an officer

post. Currently this falls short of actual requirements but may gather momentum over the next few months.

- 8.8 Based upon the above there is no intention to seek charitable status at this time for the organisation.
- 8.9 It will remain important for the organisation to maintain a watching brief on the question of structure in relation to the developing future portfolio of projects.
- 8.10 For completeness, a review of proposals to introduce a new organisation structure, the Community Interest Company, was undertaken. However this form of incorporation will not be available until the summer of 2005 in any event.

9 Development Action Plan and Timescales

- 9.1 This Business Plan has been drafted at a time of change and with some key areas of uncertainty. It will be important to review the content in the light of local developments and in particular in relation to potential for securing funding for the office and officer resource.
- 9.2 The following milestones and timeframe are suggested for the next six months:

Milestone	Timescale
Review draft Business Plan Agree general structure and content Agree the identified areas of work for TRI	December 2004
Complete review of membership, constitution and organisational relationship between members and TRI Management Committee.	January 2005
Seek clarification regarding funding proposals for office and officer support from HDC	February 2005
Continue to seek additional private sector support for a three year funding deal to support officer post, but need to take a view on the position at the latest by:	February 2005
Agree 5 year Action Plan for Thirsk and the role that TRI will play in delivery. This includes securing the proposed lead organisation commitment to working up projects in detail	March 2005
Recruit and appoint permanent officer to take day to day responsibility for Action Plan development and delivery	March 2005
Review Thirsk Action Plan and TRI Business Plan and in particular ensure that an effective communications strategy is in place and operational	July 2005

THIRSK REGENERATION INITIATIVE

The following people currently serve on the TRI Committee.

Lindsay Ross (Chair)	Private Sector Representative
Paul Brand	Yorkshire Rural Community Council
Helen Bush	Yorkshire Forward
Derek Gardiner	Thirsk Festival
Linda Gibbon	Thirsk Clock
Stephanie Hiscott	Countryside Agency
Stephen Hubbard	Chamber of Trade
Mick Jewitt	Hambleton District Council
Jan Marshall	North Yorkshire County Council
Gill Middleton	Thirsk & Sowerby Community Care
John Potter	Ritz Cinema
Rhona Pringle	Yorkshire Forward
Freda Roberts	Thirsk Town Council
Richard Rowling	Thirsk Team Ministry
Bev Southwell	Resident

THIRSK REGENERATION INITIATIVE

Thirsk MTI Projects

<i>Project</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Thirsk Clock – Youth and Community Venue.</i>	A safe environment for young people to meet.
<i>Thirsk Promotional leaflets.</i>	Design and printing of leaflets promoting the area to tourists.
<i>Improved signage.</i>	Highlighting local heritage and providing information for community and visitors.
<i>Thirsk Community Forest</i>	Support for the establishment of a 'Forest for Thirsk'
<i>Tourist Information Centre</i>	Support for the relocation of the TIC and refurbishment of premises.
<i>Hillside Rural Activities Project.</i>	The formation of an organisation to acquire and manage a permanent showground.
<i>Long Street enhancement.</i>	Phase 1 of an improvement scheme for this town gateway.
<i>Property Audit.</i>	A land and buildings audit of Thirsk town Centre.
<i>Small Projects Fund</i>	A fund that has assisted small scale projects in the area
<i>East Thirsk Learning Resource Centre</i>	Support for a newly established centre providing a range of training opportunities including computer skills.
<i>Thirsk Auction Mart.</i>	Support for a study into the potential to relocate the auction mart.
<i>Christmas Fayre</i>	To create a new Fair that will attract tourists and shoppers to Thirsk
<i>Ritz Cinema</i>	Upgrading seating and an extension to the premises to improve facilities
<i>Thirsk Festival</i>	Funding support for a part time administrator post and the acquisition of capital items
<i>Business and Tourism Signage</i>	A study to examine and report on local signage

THIRSK REGENERATION INITIATIVE

Project ideas and status derived from the local consultation exercise undertaken between August and October 2004

THEME: (A) YOUNG PEOPLE

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
A1	Create training and employment opportunities for high value and trade skills and ensure access (transport, funding) to appropriate training:	12	A10, J4		√
A2	Skatepark: Develop the existing skatepark facility for Thirsk based at Carr's Field and consider options and alternatives	7	E1,		√
A3	Help young people advocate on their own behalf: Integrate young people more into civic and community life through a youth councillor/mentor to ensure their voice is heard	5	A4,	Thirsk Clock	
A4	Involve young people in civic responsibilities: Establish shadowing opportunities and roles for young people	4	A3, A9, C4	Thirsk Clock	
A5	Develop Thirsk Clock: Create more space to allow for greater variety of activities	4		Thirsk Clock	
A6	Develop support system for 2 – 11 age range and associated groups – nursery, out of school clubs etc:	4	J1, Possible social enterprise opportunities	tbd	
A7	Addressing the diverse needs of <u>all</u> young people across the age spectrum in Thirsk and recognising the existence of 'Townies' and 'Scallies':	4	"Note different social groups who dislike each other intensely"	Thirsk Clock	
A8	Support stronger working links between the community and Thirsk School:	2		Thirsk School	
A9	Run this consultation exercise in local schools:	2	A4	Thirsk School	
A10	Attract young graduates back to Thirsk: Track recent graduates in terms of discipline studied, employment entered, location settled	2	A1		√

A11	Investigate establishing a young people's 'homeless' refuge:	2		Rural Housing Enabler (YRCC)	
A12	Town centre shops made more appealing to younger people:	0		Town Centre Management	

THEME: (B) PARISHES & RURAL HINTERLAND

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
B1	Encourage retail expansion in Thirsk to ensure it is the 'first port of call' for local shoppers:	13	B6,	Town Centre Management	
B2	Undertake improvements to public footpaths in the surrounding countryside and create maps and guides for local walks and cycle paths:	11	TRI focus group work B3, B4,		√
B3	Create better access to Thirsk from surrounding areas ('Green Lanes') and reduce reliance on car transport:	7	TRI focus group work B2, B4, C6		√
B4	Develop a more 'joined-up system of local cycle routes and way markings:	4	TRI focus group work		√
B5	Enable parish planning activity to link with TRI, Thirsk plans and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP):	3		HDC	
B6	Understand the relevance and importance of Thirsk Market Town: to the surrounding Parishes and settlements:	3	B1,	Town Centre Management	
B7	Build stronger TRI/Parish links and develop networking:	1	K3, TRI focus group work		√

THEME: (C) CIVIC PRIDE/THE ENVIRONMENT

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
C1	Improve and enhance the 'gateways' into Thirsk: seeking opportunities to work with local 'In Bloom' group with a focus on the 2005 event:	16	Tourism & promotion focus group C3, D3		√
C2	Develop the 'Thirsk Forest': give wide publicity to its activities and develop other work such as gardening clubs (schools), tree planting in town:	9		Woodlands Group	
C3	Enhance 'Town End' and establish an interesting feature: such as a fountain or public art:	9	Tourism & promotion focus group C1,		√
C4	Involve more young people in Civic ideas and developments:	8	A4,	Thirsk Clock	
C5	Ensure there is a role for older people in Thirsk and that their service needs are understood and met, encouragement and support for integration into local activities:	6		Over 50's Forum	
C6	Develop 'specialist' gardens, such as for young people, a sensory garden (Carr's Fields), sponsored gardens:	3	B3,	'In Bloom'	
C7	Rationalisation of local 'road signs':	3		HDC/NYCC	
C8	Enable better and more relevant community planning:	2			
C9	Undertake more street planting to enhance the built environment:	1		HDC	
C10	Develop a role for a 'Town Centre Ranger': that would compliment tourist information, report damage or dangerous items, litter control and to be an on-street facilitator:	0			
	Living over the shop:	-	Not active		

THEME: (D) THE ARTS

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
D1	Develop an 'Artists Quarter in Thirsk: in the area of the Ritz Cinema and Courtroom Artspace:	8	J11,		√
D2	Develop opportunities for wider cultural activities: a theatre, visiting writers, drama club:	3		tbd	
D3	Develop a public arts programme (Ouseburn/Naburn Fisherman style): coupled with smaller human scale works:	2	C1,		√
D4	Develop closer working with Rural Arts North Yorkshire (RANY) that could support establishing a regular 'Arts Festival' based on the Art Trail and will link into the Thirsk Festival:	2	D5, J7,		√
D5	Support for local artists and craftspeople: a creative arts centre for makers:	1	D4, J7	RANY	
D6	Establish a 'Literature Festival': that builds upon the local literature heritage and attraction:	1	F2, Rationalisation/joining up of 'Festivals'	Thirsk Festival(s)	
D7	Establish a 'book review' club	0			
D8	Develop a 'Docudrama': based upon the Market Towns Initiative and TRI to take out to village halls	0			

THEME: (E) COMMUNITY SAFETY

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
E1	Use CCTV in Millgate car park to cover the play area and skatepark in Carr's Field: to provide safety and protection for users:	6	A2,	Community Safety Partnership	
E2	Information Point/Enquiry Shop to be developed: helping to address crime/fear of crime issues and anti-social behaviour in the streets that has a negative impact on both residents and visitors:	3		Community Safety Partnership	
	Suggested 20mph restrictions in Topcliffe Road be phased during the day		Contrary to NYCC policy		

THEME: (F) TOURISM

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
F1	Adopt a café style culture for pavement seating and enhancing alleyways:	12		Thirsk Town Council	
F2	Rationalise main Thirsk Festivals: to share resources and infrastructure:	8	D6,	Thirsk Festival	
F3	Ensure that the retail offer and infrastructure (cafes, hotels, attractions etc) is attractive: to 'invite' tourists to come and spend.	7	G3,	Thirsk Town Council	
F4	Improvements to local signage into town: to Thirsk from A19/A168 – walking and cycleways: (possible traffic management study)	4		Work in progress	
F5	Establish public transport links to NY Moors (Sutton Bank Top) via Moors bus service:	4		tbd	
F6	Develop a 'Town Brand' for Thirsk: to support marketing campaigns and promotions and establish a local, regional, national and international identity:	2		Thirsk Town Council	
F7	Develop 'welcome Host' culture to ensure that Thirsk is welcoming to visitors:	2		HDC	
F8	Undertake a tourism study: to identify why people come/would come and why they stay/do not stay:	0	F1 – F11 Linked here	tbd	√?
F9	Develop the town's museums: and strengthen the 'Herriot' brand and links:	0			
F10	Undertake a study to assess the feasibility of establishing a Town Centre Management position:	0			
F11	Investigate the possibility of creating a hotel facility that will at least accommodate a 'coach full' of tourists: to ensure that local 'half-day' attractions feature in destination management plans and retain tourists in town:	0			

THEME: (G) PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
G1	Long Street enhancement: to address improved 'gateway' to Thirsk, environmental/public safety issues, vehicle weight issues, car parking – restricted views, the York/Scarborough road roundabout: The garage site: magnet for anti-social behaviour, blight, eyesore, poor image of town at gateway site	35		HDC	
G2	Address litter issues through raising public awareness in all sectors:	8		Thirsk Town Council	
G3	Alleyways project – phase 2: continue to undertake improvements to alleyways and also consider advertising/signposting for businesses located in alleyways – need a uniform system of signage ('A' boards are not an option:	6	F3,	Thirsk Town Council	
G4	Auction Mart relocation: follow progress and ensure support as required and maintain an interest in the vacated site and its future development:	5	Work in progress	Auction Mart Co.	
G5	Establish local affordable housing needs and specifically the needs of young people: working with the Hambleton Rural Housing Enabler:	5		Rural Housing Enabler (YRCC)	
G6	Potential new uses for the redundant police station building: Community Resource Centre:	3	J2,		√
G7	Further Market Place enhancement: to include improved shelters for those waiting for buses/taxis	2	TC Study report awaited (+Traffic Study)	Thirsk Town Council	
G8	Development of a large, modern public venue, seating 300+: for local productions, Thirsk Festival use, conferences etc	0			
	Shop facades in Market Place - Thirsk		Not active		
	Thirsk Castle area enhancement		Not active		

THEME: (H) COMMUNICATIONS

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
H1	Develop a local 'user friendly' web site for Thirsk and District: to include the parishes: Note: a site already exists at (http://www.thirskonline.co.uk/)	5	H3,		√
H2	Making links with and understanding the needs of local people with a range of disabilities:	3		CCA	
H3	Investigate ways in which local activities and initiatives can be linked up and widely publicised: through a local forum meeting, a local newsheet/newsletter, a local web site, where possible using existing partnerships:	2	H1,		√
H4	Develop local use of Broadband technology:	2	J6,	Business Association	
H5	TRI to develop and maintain better communication links with the general public:	1			√

THEME: (J) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
J1	Support and promote the creation of social enterprises and ideas:	7	A6,		√
J2	Re-use of former police station as artists studio space: Artist's Quarter links – working with RANY on skills development ideas such as web design, graphics design, skills training for new small businesses, enterprise and self-employment:	4	G6,		√
J3	Address the needs of the farming community; diversification:	4		BLINK	
J4	Assess the need to provide training and higher value wage job, especially for young people: and make links with local employers to assess skills gaps:	3	A1,		√
J5	Extend the developable area on Dalton Industrial Estate to provide world class employment opportunities:	2		HDC	
J6	Support and develop wider use and take up of Broadband technology in local businesses: development of net-based businesses, address the needs for a rural Broadband service:	2	H4,	Business Association	
J7	Develop a 'craft centre' with small unit space for makers: and include display space, shared services etc:	2	D4, D5,	RANY	
J8	Investigate the need for greater allocation of employment land in/near Thirsk: suitable for significant job creation:	2	Noted as long term prospect		
J9	Conference Centre: development of a facility close to A19 – possibly incorporated with new Auction Mart:	1	11 negative votes registered	HDC	
J10	Generally exploiting the excellent transport links for Thirsk in relation to A19/A1 corridor:	1	YF SRIP sub theme	HDC	
J11	Creating and developing an 'Artist's Quarter' by the Ritz Cinema:	1	D1,		√
J12	Supporting a more comprehensive provision of catering/shopping for visitors: including early evening catering offers:	1	Town Centre Management	Thirsk Town Council	

THEME: (K) TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
K1	Thirsk Train Station: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent trains to local towns/cities • Better connections to London trains and also northwards • Better information/access to waiting room • Regular, subsidised bus service from town/estates to station including Sunday service • Better/safer access across lines for elderly people and children (steps too steep/dangerous) • An improved location map showing directions into town centre • Overall consideration of the needs of disabled people • Poor levels of manning • Provision of public telephone 	(26)	Network Rail + Train operators		
		8			
		4			
		3			
		7			
		2			
		1			
1					
K2	Traffic Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of volume of traffic (heavy goods) in town centre/Market Place and place speed restrictions (20mph) • Need for additional controlled pedestrian crossing points • Traffic to and from big school (Thirsk School) needs to be slowed down (20mph) – with traffic lights 	(12)	Traffic Study awaited	NYCC	
		11			
		1			

K3	Bus Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low floor buses needed for Thirsk and Sowerby • Service bus for Thirsk Market Place goes into Norby Estate but does not enter that part where the majority of elderly people live (restricted turning issues) • Better waiting/shelter facilities needed in the Market Place • Better organisation for bus/taxi waiting in Market Place • Parish Councils should work more closely with existing community transport schemes to identify resident's needs 	(6) 2 4	B7,		
K4	Build a new road from Carlton Miniott (close to the Red House) to the Topcliffe Road: Build a slip road on the A168/Topcliffe Road junction to take traffic north – A19/A170	7	1 negative vote		
K5	Investigate provision of Community Transport/mini-bus sharing:	1		CCA	
K6	Footpath along Topcliffe Road is divided for cyclists and pedestrians: creating too narrow segments and danger for users: confusion for young people regarding the position of riding cycles on footpaths:	0	2 negative votes		
K7	Undertake survey to establish local/area transport needs of young people:	0			

THEME: (L) ACCESS

	Ideas emerging from consultations	Public consultation score	Notes/links	Pass to	TRI retain lead
L1	Yorkshire stone paving in Market Place difficult for wheelchair users: better crossing point where Finkle Street enters Market Place:	4			
L2	Footpath access across castle Garth not possible by wheelchair: needs wider kissing gate:	1	Work in progress		
L3	Undertake an audit of local shops, hotels, cafes and places of public access to assess position: also the position in relation to access bus provision:	0			