



**Northumberland  
Strategic Partnership**



James Burke (left) ICT strategy manager at NSP with Terry Gordon, owner and manager of the Ford Post Office and convenience store, which is benefiting from the £10 million regional broadband enabling programme.

## Issue 2

### News in brief:

Northumberland at the Centre of Enterprise	2-3
Sector Board Update	4-5
One Rural Voice	6
NSP Performance	7
Sharing Best Practice	8
NSP Board	9-10
Who's Who at NSP	11

**April 2005**

**Welcome to the second edition of VIBE. As we start another financial year, it is a particularly busy time for all partners as we plan for the year ahead.**

2004/05 was a good year and, while we can look back with pride at many of our successes, we must also look to the future. With this in mind, NSP has already set its corporate priorities for 2005/2006 with key targets that include:

- Moving from a funding led to a strategy led approach
- Establishing a new Community Strategy
- Managing the reduction of partnership resources from April 2006

- Ensuring that partnership structures work effectively and that everything is properly joined up
- Far better communication with partners
- Reducing bureaucracy where possible and properly evaluating the impact of what we are doing
- Ensuring NSP retains a cost effective, core structure and investing in our people
- Retaining NSP's status within the region.

These objectives will be supported by work in key areas including: business development, skills & enterprise, energy & environment, community regeneration, ICT, health & well being and culture & tourism.

NSP cannot achieve these objectives in isolation. We will need to work closely with, and provide support to our partners in achieving continued success for Northumberland.

We can look forward with a good deal of optimism. After a five day audit of NSP systems by One NorthEast we received a favourable report. We will use the findings to help us further improve our systems and processes.

NSP has also been successful in achieving Investors in People (IIP) status. This is a great achievement and the NSP Executive, Board and staff are very proud of the outcome.

**John Litherland**  
Executive Director NSP

## Northumberland at the Centre of Enterprise

A growing network of new business units and support services are springing up across Northumberland to encourage job creation and economic growth. From Berwick in the north to Blyth in the south east, the county is striving to create the right environment to support start-ups and expanding businesses.

NSP investment in employment sites, workspace and offices is helping transform support for new and existing business.

In our last newsletter we introduced the £3.3 million Northumbria Centre for Enterprise in Ashington, which provides businesses with reception facilities, an on site Business Advice Centre providing mentoring and networking services, conference meeting rooms, a training suite, 23 office units and 17 workshop units.

The Centre is now open for business and two of its newest tenants are Perfect Bar Limited, which specialises in the provision of audio-vision equipment and high tech computerised music and promotions programmes for the pub industry, and Ernest Watson, a financial advisory company. Two very diverse companies operating in growing markets.

Alongside new business premises, NSP has also invested in Northumberland's network of Business Advice Centres. Business Link for Northumberland has opened two new centres in Morpeth and Hexham, improving access to the full range of Business Link services including one-to-one counselling with personal business advisors, business workshops, meeting, conference and office space available to hire.



Both offices opened in November and are already showing great results in increasing the number of enquiries and businesses supported. In Hexham, enquiries from individuals seeking counselling and advice to set up businesses have risen by 52%, with Morpeth reporting a staggering 80% increase in enquiries based on the same period last year.

*NSP Executive Director, John Litherland, at the Northumbria Centre for Enterprise in Ashington.*



Through its capital investment programme the partnership is helping to create a more accessible, better quality business environment.

In Berwick, ambitious plans to revitalise North Road industrial estate are part of a raft of measures being driven forward by Berwick Borough Council which could create up to 200 new jobs.

With the support of NSP and Northumberland County Council, plans are progressing for a £1.7 million extension to North Road and a separate £2.6 million project to develop a new Business Incubation Centre in the heart of the town centre.

North Road is a prime gateway site and NSP funding is being sought for the purchase of additional land and infrastructure improvements. The new development has been earmarked for SMEs and light industrial use, with work due to begin this summer to develop the site for 22 new business units.

The Business Incubation Centre will create a focus for enterprising activity in North Northumberland by providing state of the art office and workspace integrated with on site business support services.

At the opposite end of the county, funding has also been secured for two exciting business developments in Blyth Valley. NSP is supporting private sector developments for new business units at Cramlington's Nelson Industrial Estate and Blyth's Kitty Brewster Estate.

These projects will lever private sector investment of over £3 million and will create up to 200 jobs for South East Northumberland, adding to the growing number of high quality facilities for small and medium sized firms.

*Mark Nesbitt, managing director of Treelocate in Belford, which has opened a new factory thanks to NSP support.*

As we move into a new financial year our sector boards continue to evolve and develop. Business and enterprise has been highlighted in the previous pages. This section gives a brief update on what is happening in our other sector boards.

## Culture

The Culture<sup>10</sup> 'Hotbed' programme of 2004 was a great success. Our contribution to the regional programme included The Alwick Garden, Fashion at Belsay and the William Turner and Lindesfarne gardens. The 2005 Culture<sup>10</sup> programme is currently being firmed up and will promote Festivals of Rivers and the Sea, Music, Sports and Visual Arts.

Projects from Northumberland which have been accepted by Culture<sup>10</sup> as part of the 2005 programme include:

- Northumberland Sand Sculpture festival, 25th-26th June
- Kielder 'Source of the Tyne' festival, 28th-31st July
- Amble Sea Fayre, 2nd-3rd July
- Blyth Maritime Festival, 23rd -24th July
- Small Ships race along the Northumberland coastline, 24th-25th July
- A brilliant programme of music festivals and events across the county celebrating our musical diversity.

## Environment and Energy

NSP is supporting partners including Northern Renewable Energy Group, One NorthEast and Newcastle University to develop the concept of an Energy Centre at Cockle Farm near Morpeth. The site could develop into a world class demonstration centre for land based energy resources including biomass, gasification, solar and micro-hydro. It would also have learning and demonstration facilities alongside a working farm.

Groundwork Trust Northumberland is set to launch in April. The new body will focus on environmental improvements, creating learning and job opportunities as well as improving our physical environments. The post of Executive Director for Groundwork Northumberland has just been advertised, further details are available at [www.groundwork.org.uk](http://www.groundwork.org.uk).

## Health and Wellbeing

The success of the Northumberland Warmzone project in tackling fuel poverty in the county looks set to continue. Following negotiations with a leading energy supplier, NSP is hopeful of securing a further £5 million to support the project over the next three to four years. This will ensure that even the most hard-to-reach communities have access to effective fuel efficiency advice and a range of insulation measures.

Access to services is a priority for the Health and Wellbeing Sector Board, and transport, particularly for rural Northumberland, is a major constraint. In Berwick, an innovative pilot project is underway supported by Northumberland County Council. The project will look at the potential of utilising spare capacity in school transport and social care transport to meet community transport needs. It will also investigate ways to reduce the demand for ambulance patient support by better use of existing social care transport services.

## ICT

Following the completion of the regional Broadband enablement programme all of Northumberland's telephone exchanges are now broadband enabled. This means that approximately 96% of homes and businesses in Northumberland should soon have access to a broadband network.

The success of the regional project means that the North East is the only region outside London where every telephone exchange has broadband capability.

The take up of broadband by households and businesses in Northumberland is exceeding regional and national figures. Northumberland's take up is 19.5% against a regional average of 13.4% and a national average of 18.6%.

Although Northumberland is moving in the right direction, we still have a long way to go. NSP is investing in new ways of improving broadband awareness and driving upwards the take up of advanced applications and services so that we use our ICT infrastructure to give Northumberland a competitive advantage.

Our current projects include:

- Developing plans to ensure that Northumberland achieves 100% access to broadband through wireless and satellite technology
- Testing Internet Telephony where small businesses are offered a broadband telephone handset that provides them with a low cost telephone service that makes use of a broadband connection
- Piloting satellite links and wireless networks so that more remote rural areas can access broadband services, sometimes faster and cheaper

- Supporting Business Link for Northumberland to deliver 24 seminars to businesses in Northumberland to increase knowledge and awareness of broadband – and also to help businesses ensure their websites comply with the new Disability Discrimination Act.



*Angus Webb of Dipsticks Research in Allendale which is benefiting from the Internet Telephony service.*

## One Rural Voice

An exciting new project is to be launched to enhance rural development in Northumberland.

Northumberland Rural Voices will launch in June and has been developed in response to calls to improve communication within the county which followed the Foot and Mouth crisis.

The network aims to be a focal point for rural development allowing organisations across all sectors – public, private, voluntary and community – to tap into support services and access key information. It will also encourage best practice and ensure the sharing of ideas.

Among the benefits provided by Rural Voices will be:

- One, online, source of information
- A project officer dedicated to building the network, responding to enquiries and uploading information to a website
- Access to a telephone enquiry service and printed information.

This will ensure organisations across Northumberland can:

- Promote their work to a wider audience
- Receive up to date information relevant to Northumberland
- Ensure their ideas are heard by key agencies and decision making bodies
- Network with other organisations and businesses in their field and beyond
- Be part of an innovative and exciting network of individuals committed to a better future for rural Northumberland.



Funding has been secured for the project until March 2006 from NSP and One NorthEast, Northumberland County Council, the Countryside Agency and Business Link for Northumberland.

Further information about Rural Voices is available by contacting John Cooper. Email: [John@ruralvoices.org.uk](mailto:John@ruralvoices.org.uk) or telephone: **(01670) 533 900**.



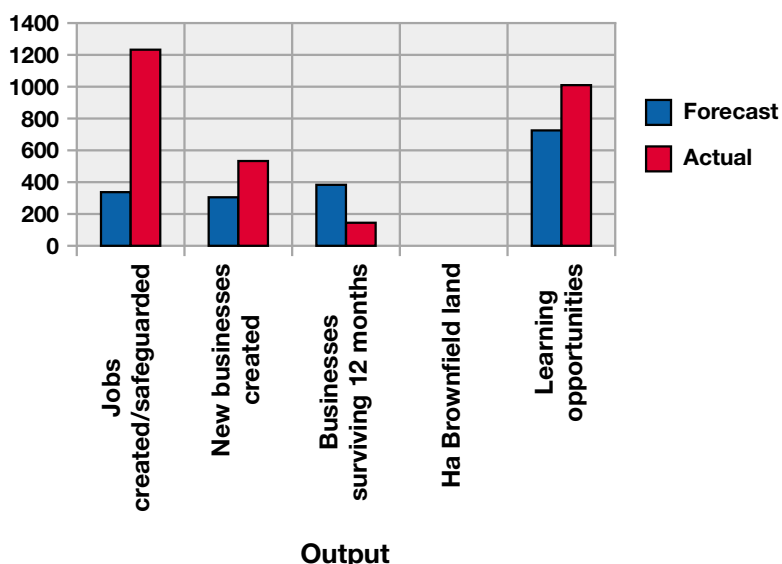
During the 2004/5 financial year, our performance in relation to spend and outputs was good.

At the end of the financial year, we had:

- Defrayed £12.2million Single Programme funding and £4.5million Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)
- Exceeded our output targets in job creation, creation of new businesses and creation of new learning opportunities
- Approved 41 new projects taking the total of live projects to 183.

The following charts illustrate NSP performance against spend and output targets at the end of quarter three 2004/5. Figures are cumulative up to the end December 2004.

**Achievements of outputs against targets in quarter three**

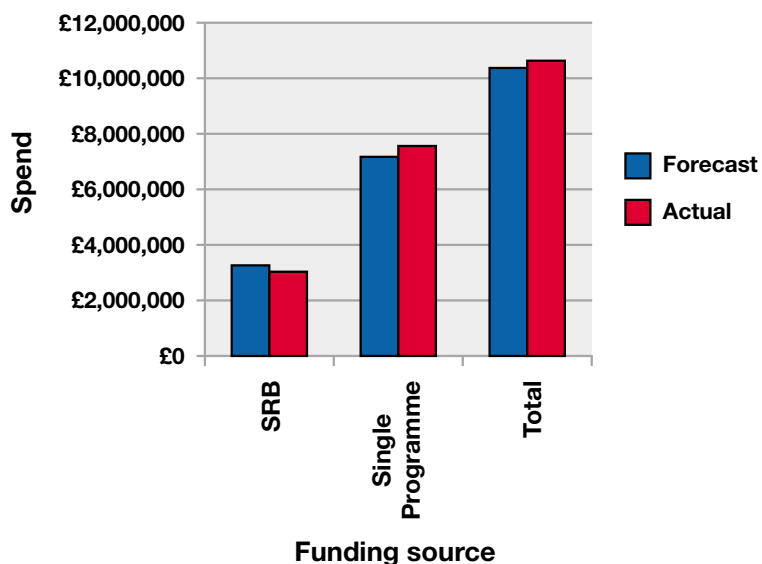


2005/6 will be a challenging year as we continue to move to a more strategic approach to the allocation of Single Programme resources through the Commissioning Frameworks.

We expect to approve around 25 new projects, the majority of these from our 2005/6 Capital Investment Programme which includes:

- Creation of a new virtual learning campus across Tynedale
- Exploring the potential of a biotechnology cluster for South East Northumberland
- Continuing to upgrade key employment sites
- Supporting new workspace in Berwick, Alnwick and South East Northumberland
- Making our access to Broadband cheaper, faster and more secure
- Supporting the development of culture & tourism in Northumberland.

**NSP Spend against target quarter three**



NSP, working with the Sustainable Cities Research Institute at Northumbria University, is hosting a series of networking seminars which are bringing together key stakeholders in the county.

The aim of these seminars is to:

- Generate learning and share experience
- Bring partners with common interests together
- Enable partners to see how their work fits into the county regeneration agenda
- Identify key lessons learned and share and disseminate these
- Learn about good practice and experience in other parts of the region.

Two seminars have already been held focussing upon the community and voluntary sector and the enterprise culture.

'Ways Forward in Challenging Times' explored a range of key issues for the voluntary and community sector including: funding constraints; the role played by the voluntary sector in encouraging regeneration and tackling social inequality; enhancing links with the statutory sector and the need for the sector to speak with a clear and co-ordinated voice.

The second seminar focussed on the development of an enterprise culture in Northumberland. Participants had the opportunity to learn from the experiences of those working in this wide and diverse area. The seminar helped to 'draw the picture' of enterprise activity in Northumberland and develop some ways forward for this challenging agenda. Both seminars were well received by those taking part and included several workshops and discussion groups.

A further seminar on culture and tourism in the county was held on 31st March at Longhirst Hall and the programme for the coming months is currently being developed

If you have any ideas for future seminar topics, please contact Julia Betts or John Gaddes at NSP.

## In the first in a series of features on NSP board members, we profile Board Chair, Jane Nolan, looking at her career and work with the Partnership.

Jane has been Chair of the board since January 2004, having previously been Vice Chair. She is also on the board of One NorthEast, is Vice Chair of Business Link for Northumberland and is an employer representative on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority National Adult Occupational Standards Board.

She is a graduate of the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, where she is now a member of the Development Council, and has an MBA from the Open University.

Jane is also the chief executive and one of the founding directors of the Shark Group – an award winning Northumberland Company manufacturing survival products and technical clothing for the offshore oil, outdoor pursuits and corporate wear markets. In 2000, she was awarded an MBE for services to her company and UK exports in the New Year Honours list.

### What does your role as NSP chair involve?

It mainly involves chairing NSP board meetings and standing conferences, and being an ambassador and champion for the partnership. I have played a part in the negotiation of the NSP strategic Investment Plan with ONE. I attend regional meetings with the other SRP chairs and Executive Directors.

I'm currently leading a group from the Board and Executive Board working on partnership development. Even though we are at the top end of partnership practise nationally, we know that we need to do better and are committed to continuous improvement.

### Why did you get involved?

Regeneration and economic development can make a real difference to people's lives, their prosperity, skills, aspirations, health and well being. I feel very passionate about Northumberland and the North East and my biggest personal motivation to get involved was the opportunity to create better lives for our communities. At NSP I feel that I am working within an effective Partnership to deliver change and create opportunity.



*NSP Board Chair Jane Nolan*

## What do you see as the challenges facing NSP?

The strategic agenda is moving very fast, particularly with new regional and national policy initiatives such as the Northern Way coming along. We need to be very cohesive as a Partnership to make the most of these opportunities and deal with the challenges they bring. We can only do this by being strategic, in other words, being focussed on where we can deliver real changes in the county.

We also need to engage with others, making the case for a rural focus alongside the Tyneside City region and its hinterland. The increasing emphasis on fewer, higher impact projects could disadvantage Northumberland if we can't prioritise. We are also losing SRB funding from April 2006. We must be willing to take the tough decisions to ensure we maximize the impact of the resources we have. To help us do this, we are working up detailed frameworks to direct our future investment.

Northumberland needs a vibrant, outward looking economy with more businesses and jobs, so support for business growth, start up and survival is essential. It is extremely important for us to encourage workforce development and the creation of the skills we need for the 21st century. Encouraging an enterprising, 'can do' approach and a culture of lifelong learning will support the development of our economy and help more people and businesses reach their full potential.

We also need to make the most of our rich and diverse cultural heritage and our natural assets, which can make a vital contribution to the regeneration of the county, both through tourism and by putting Northumberland at the forefront of renewable energy technologies.

The engagement of the community and voluntary sector will be vital in the development of a new community strategy for the county.

Because we don't have the critical mass in Northumberland, we have realized the importance of working in effective partnership. We can meet the challenges of the future because we are prepared to keep building on our strengths and developing our Partnership in the face of change, to maximize what can be achieved by working together.

## NSP Board Members

### Local Government

Northumberland County Council: *Cllr Michael Davey, OBE (Vice Chair)*

Northumberland County Council: *Cllr Michael Jeans*

Alnwick District Council: *Cllr John Taylor*

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council: *Cllr Anthony Hughes*

Blyth Valley Borough Council: *Cllr Dave Stephens*

Castle Morpeth Borough Council: *Cllr David Parker*

Tynedale District Council: *Cllr John Herron*

Wansbeck District Council: *Cllr John Devon*

Northumberland Association of Local Councils: *Jim Rudd*

Northumberland National Park Authority: *Cllr John Riddle*

### Local Strategic Partnerships

Alnwick LSP: *Peter Smith*

Berwick Borough Council LSP: *John Robertson*

Blyth Valley LSP: *Thom Bradley*

Castle Morpeth LSP: *David Cowans*

Tynedale LSP: *Richard Powell*

Wansbeck LSP: *Colin Blakey*

### Community & Voluntary Sector

Community Council of Northumberland: *Venerable Bob Langley (Vice Chair)*

Development Trusts Association: *David Milburn*

### Private Sector

North East Chamber of Commerce: *Martin Lawlor (Port of Blyth)*

Business Link for Northumberland Board Member: *Mike Rudd (Hedley Purvis)*

### Regional Development Agency - ONE NorthEast

One NorthEast Board Member: *Jane Nolan, MBE (Chair)*

One NorthEast Director of Corporate Resources: *Malcolm Page*

### Police

Northumbria Police: *Supt Graham Pears*

### Health

Northumberland Care Trust: *Richard Houlden, OBE*

### Learning

Northumberland Learning & Skills Council: *Jackie Axleby*

### Trade Union

Trades Union Congress: *John McCormack*

Visit our website at  
[www.NSP.org.uk](http://www.NSP.org.uk)

We want to make our information accessible to all. If you require this newsletter in a different format, please call **01670 5000630** to discuss your needs