



Partnerships: working across boundaries

Tourism

V/O commentary - David Mayle

While the benefits of such public/private partnerships are clear, there are potential conflicts of interest of which the council has to beware.

Brian Smith

“The two real, potential dis-benefits of working with a joint company really are that, we have to step backwards to make sure, using public money, that everything is done properly, that all proper planning procedures are followed and we’re not giving any favours to that joint company. I’m sure that we’re not.

And secondly, that there isn’t a perception out there that it’s not worth coming into Stoke-on-Trent and having a go, because the best opportunities have already been claimed by the joint company. The real benefits are there to be seen, jobs on the ground, development on the ground, and that’s actually happening.”

V/O Commentary - David Mayle

Overall improvements to the look and prosperity of the area are behind another public/private partnership.

The reputation of Stoke’s potteries attracts tourists throughout the year, but at Royal Doulton facilities were limited to factory visits during working hours.

Valerie Baynton – Royal Doulton

“We had the idea to develop a visitor centre for a very long time. We realised it was something that we needed very much to offer facilities for visitors to visit seven days a week, and during holiday periods. We approached the council and asked if there was any funding which would aid us in this project and fortunately there was.”

Helen Beech – Snr. Planning Officer - City of Stoke on Trent

“ We had to persuade Government Office to fund this project because they were unsure about funding a private sector initiative in this particular instance, because one would expect that Royal Doulton ought to be prepared to put the investment into this development themselves. But at the end of the day Royal Doulton’s prime business is to make pottery, to make ceramics, and we wanted them to develop their tourism. Then it was a question of exploring with Royal Doulton how they were going to develop the site, what their ideas were, helping them to develop their ideas to ensure that they met the grant criteria.”

Valerie Baynton

“They helped us and guided us through the bid form, completing the form, which was very complicated. We had to fill all kinds of criteria to ask for the money and they helped us and advised us in doing that, completing that, and making sure very importantly that we met the deadlines, which the regional office wanted us to meet, the time deadlines and so on, so they were very very helpful. We needed the public money and the advice and assistance which they were able to give us, yes.”

Helen Beech

“I think ultimately Royal Doulton was stepping into the unknown. This was new territory for Royal Doulton. In a sense it was new territory for the City Council because partnership with Royal Doulton had not been attempted before. We haven’t got the resources on our own to fund the projects that we want to fund to achieve the regeneration, so we’re now in this sort of bidding culture, where we are having to bid competitively. And it’s through this bidding culture that we’re in a sense encouraged to form Partnerships with other organisations and agencies,

and also to achieve a cocktail of funding. We're not going to get a hundred per cent funding from any single source."

Valerie Baynton

"We've helped to promote tourism for the City, so we attract people to the area. They spend longer in the area because there's more to see, and also they can come at weekends. And the weekend visitor is the visitor who traditionally has perhaps more income to spend because perhaps they are working weekdays so at the weekend they have more spare income to spend, so it's a better visitor to have in the City."