
Ex Ante Appraisal of the Urban Centre Integrated Development Plans (IDP's) for Priority 5 (Part A)

A Draft Report for the South Yorkshire Objective One Team

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Contents

1.0	SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	1
2.0	Introduction and approach.....	4
3.0	Strategy and vision.....	5
3.1	Objectives and Area Delineation	5
3.2	Programme Linkages and Cross Cutting Themes.....	5
3.3	Outputs, Gateway Criteria and Eligibility	6
3.4	Partnership and Consultation	6
4.0	Economic Analysis.....	7
4.1	Economic Overview.....	7
4.2	Outcomes and Costs Overview	7
4.2.1	Table One: Measure 29 Outputs and Cost Requirements	8
4.3	Specific Comments on Economic Aspects	8
4.3.1	Scope and Geographical Coverage	8
4.3.2	Baseline Data and Rationale for Intervention	9
4.3.3	The Supply Side	9
4.3.4	Plan Linkages	10
4.3.5	Cross Cutting Themes	11
4.3.6	Delivery Issues and Private Sector Involvement.....	11
5.0	Property and Transport.....	13
5.1	Property.....	13
5.1.1	Marketing, Supply Side Issues and Plan Integration.....	13
5.1.2	Regulation and Timeframes	14
5.1.3	Other Property Concerns	14
5.2	Transport and Labour Mobility Assessment.....	15
6.0	Cross Cutting themes	16
6.1	Environment and Sustainability	16
6.1.1	Sustainable Development.....	16
6.2	Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion.....	17
6.3	The Information Society	18
7.0	Summary	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7.1	Strategy Vision and Economic Analysis.....	1
7.2	Transport and Labour Mobility.....	1

7.3	Cross Cutting Themes.....	2
7.4	Property Issues for Part B	2

1.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our key issues and concerns are highlighted throughout the report. In summary these are as follows:

1.1 Strategy Vision and Economic Analysis

- Linkages with the SPD, PC and other Priorities could be enhanced. This could be done through more meticulous cross-referencing and statements of how the Plans will add value to other areas of the programme.
- Linkages between the Urban and Areas and SEZ's need to specified.
- Outcomes and costs need to specified and linked more effectively to the PC and SPD.
- The plans need to say how they will build on past EU investments.
- Further clarity about how the core and wider town centres relate to each other within the plans would be useful.
- More robust baseline data would improve the rationale for intervention and make the plans easier to monitor (a common approach might be sensible).
- The plans could set out more clearly how the supply side of the labour market will adjust to meet demand side change (e.g. links to target wards and access to opportunities).
- Many of the labour market assessments within the plans could usefully address higher level skills (critical to some of the functions that are being attracted).
- Supply chain and cluster issues could be considered in more depth (though this may be more relevant for Part B or the SEZs).

1.2 Transport and Labour Mobility

- Further data on access to communities could be provided and there could be a better fit with Local Transport Plans.
- The transport implications of new clusters of economic development could be considered as well as equity and sustainable transport measures (e.g. innovative mechanisms to encourage non-car based access).

1.3 Cross Cutting Themes

- In terms of environmental sustainability the plans could demonstrate how the actions they propose will contribute towards environmental protection or encourage the more efficient use of natural resources (either individually or in aggregate).
- There is a great deal of scope to promote sustainability through taking new innovative approaches to project design and delivery and recognising the wider benefits of certain initiatives (e.g. urban design to promote safe as well as pleasant environments).
- Plans could demonstrate how they propose to take a proactive stance in securing new employment opportunities specifically for locally disadvantaged communities.
- Further work would be useful to develop an approach that integrates equal opportunities and gender issues into the “hard” infrastructure projects such as through resident involvement and planning and design of sites and services. It is here that transport becomes a key issue and should be further explored.
- Plan could make more useful observations about the nature of ICT use and the measures and actions required to support a knowledge based economy i.e. an economy in which the ability to generate, access, store and distribute knowledge will be key to competitive success.

1.4 Property Issues for Part B

In considering plans for targeting areas or specific projects the Part B's will need to show the following property issues have been addressed.

- Land ownership and assembly issues including the need for re-location of existing businesses and the possibility of CPO's.
- Investigation and costing of ground conditions and necessary site remediation.
- Detailed scheme plans.
- Evidence of demand either in the form of pre-lets/requirements for specific accommodation or statistical/empirical evidence of need.
- Confirmation of the development team, the overall management structure and how the project will be delivered.
- Planning and other statutory enquiries.
- Availability/capacity of services.
- Detailed financial appraisals showing the terms of any forward sales/pre-lets, construction costs, developers profit etc, together with risk/sensitivity analysis to ensure the transaction is reasonable.

- Details of how individual projects will be funded, over the course of development and in the longer term. A robust appraisal backed by a development and funding team with the appropriate track record will need to be shown.
- Clarification of the contribution required under Priority 5 and any other source of public sector money (linkages).
- Consideration of the development documentation/structure, including joint ventures restrictions, clawback or overage clauses etc. The timing and phasing of the proposal.

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

ECOTEC Research and Consulting Limited in association with Weatherall Green and Smith were commissioned by the Objective 1 Team in South Yorkshire to undertake an ex ante appraisal of all 7 Integrated Development Plans which are being prepared in two parts (A and B). Each plan is in two parts - Part A deals with the general approach and strategy; and Part B with specific proposals and projects. This report relates only to the draft Part As submitted to the partnership in December 2000. The Part Bs will not be available until the spring.

This report highlights our impressions of the first part of the first tranche of plans – Part A of the 4 Urban Centre's (Barnsley, Rotherham, Doncaster and Sheffield). We have divided the appraisal into the following areas:

- **Section 3.0** provides an overall appraisal of the Strategy and Vision for the areas (against the IDP Template);
- **Section 4.0** analyses Economic aspects (and an initial look at finance and outputs);
- **Section 5.0** provides an assessment of the Property Market and Transportation issues;
- **Section 6.0** looks at Cross-Cutting Thematic issues; and,
- **Section 7.0** presents some Conclusions and Lessons for Part B.

3.0 STRATEGY AND VISION

All the IDPs have attempted to address the areas of strategy and vision. **In the majority of cases the vision, strategy and mission statement is well developed** – often this is in the form of warm words rather than specifics. The plans need to work on ensuring that there is a clarity of vision that can clearly be demonstrated through the objectives and subsequent projects that are selected.

3.1 Objectives and Area Delineation

The objectives of the plans generally appear to be appropriate to the local economies. Within the Barnsley and Sheffield IDPs an attempt has been made to provide a developed baseline analysis. However, justification of objectives could be further provided to ensure an integrated approach. It is interesting to see that in the main the IDPs have concentrated on a rationale for selection as an Urban Centre rather than a rationale for the objectives that they have highlighted. Greater attention to selection based on a rationale following on from baseline analysis would have give a more developed and integrated approach.

In terms of the areas delineated, most IDPs show the extent of the urban centre.

However, the rationale for these delineations could be further developed. For instance the area in Rotherham's plan shows a clear use of zones to identify the area and this is useful.

3.2 Programme Linkages and Cross Cutting Themes

In a general sense the plans all highlight the relevant policy framework and links with the SPD and PC, both for Priority 5 and the other priorities. This shows an awareness of the context of the IDPs. **However, these linkages could be further developed into to more holistic and integrated approach.** All the plans address the issue of links to SEZs to some extent. For example, Sheffield identifies links with the M1 corridor. These links could be further explored to show any actions that will directly link the Urban Centre with the SEZ. It is interesting to note that no urban centres show any linkage with other urban centres and seem to treat them in a competitive manner, if at all. Any links should further be explored.

In the main the cross cutting themes are dealt with intermittently. All plans identify the importance of the cross cutting themes and some, such as Doncaster, make an effort to show the plan's contribution to achievement. However, these approaches could be further developed to ensure that the themes are mainstreamed into the overall planning, design and implementation of the IDPs.

3.3 Outputs, Gateway Criteria and Eligibility

All areas provide some details of the outputs that will be delivered by the plan. Ensuring that the outputs clearly relate to those in the Programme Complement and their definitions could further develop this area. The plans should also provide clear indication of their resource needs even (in the Part A partly) to ensure an ability to assess value for money and partly to inform the debate on the allocation of the Measure 29 resources.

At this stage none of the plans clearly identify gateway criteria (they hint that these will be provided by the Driver 5 Partnership) or give a feel for the quality of outputs. These are essential to ensure the quality, eligibility and suitability of projects. Development of these areas in Part B will greatly assist the quality of the plans.

In terms of eligibility, some of the plans will need to be clearer about where EU funding can be used. For instance by highlighting the non-eligibility European funding for aspects of retail, leisure and housing. Whilst it is perfectly appropriate to mention the importance of non-eligible uses our view is **that it would be useful for the Driver 5 Partnership to highlight the parameters of what is and is not likely to be acceptable in EU terms.**

3.4 Partnership and Consultation

All the plans highlight their partnership and consultation arrangements. In the main these seem appropriate, although some of the plans such as Rotherham are revisiting their arrangements. The predominant issues in relation to consultation are those of community and resident involvement and private sector involvement. These need to be addressed to ensure a fully integrated approach. Innovative approaches to achieve involvement should be welcomed. **Our key concern is that a range of private sector interests should be engaged at an early stage.**

4.0 ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

4.1 Economic Overview

The economic assessment of the urban centre IDPs ('the plans') is a key elements of the ex ante appraisal. **Our initial view is that whilst they are quite a mixed set, all areas have done a great deal and all provide a good working foundation.** Barnsley and Sheffield clearly contain most in the way of new thinking and are much more rounded as strategies. Doncaster and Rotherham are much more property focussed. The former in particular would benefit from shortening/sharpening up and is clearly still being worked on. The latter is, we suggest, in need of more development – it seems largely a vehicle for seeking to achieve incremental development/land use change and does not go far enough in developing the linked aspects (although it may, of course, in a practical sense to be the easiest to implement!).

The plans are alike in proposing sensible and relatively conventional measures to improve their respective urban centres. Each has major property development and business support components and each, though to varying degrees, has a labour market supply side component as a counterpart to (property and business support) measures to stimulate the demand for labour. The plans meet the fundamental requirements of the respective urban centres and appear likely to deliver the outcomes envisaged in the Objective One Programme Complement, though a final view on outcomes will not be possible until the Part Bs have been reviewed.

The degree of detail in the plans differs markedly: different judgements have evidently been made about what should go in Part A rather than Part B. Even in Part A, however, there should be an estimate of the targets to be achieved expressed in the same format as the tables on Page 131 (Sheffield) and Page 135 (Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham) of the Programme Complement.

4.2 Outcomes and Costs Overview

The specification of outcomes and costs is limited at this stage making it impossible to say anything detailed about likely value for money, **perhaps because they are to be detailed in the Part Bs.** Barnsley assume that they will get 30% of the Measure 29 cash (£11-12m ERDF¹) and deliver 30% of the Measure 29 outcomes. Doncaster seeks £20m (57% of the total at EUR=£0.60) in exchange for a greater than pro rata share of the outcomes. Doncaster's bid for the lion's share of the Measure 29 resources will no doubt be an area for

¹ Measures 28 and 29 are each allocated EUR58.27m in the Programme Complement. Sterling amounts depend on the exchange rate. Barnsley's assumption that 30% of the funding is £11-12m is optimistic. At EUR=£0.60, 30% is £10.5m.

lively discussion. Rotherham does not specify an ERDF cash requirement but will require substantially more than the small balance of about £3.5m that would remain if Barnsley and Doncaster had their requirements met in full. **At present therefore Measure 29 appears over-bid in cash terms, though promising more than the output and impact targets.** Table One summarises the position at this stage.

4.2.1 Table One: Measure 29 Outputs and Cost Requirements

Measure 5.29						
SPD Indicator Estimates	SPD Total	IDPs				Variance (%)
		B	D	R	Total	
Key Outputs						
Hectares of Land reclaimed	44	13	25		38	
Sq m of Floorspace Constructed	55942	16800	32000		48800	
Sq m of Floorspace refurbished	122374	36700	70000		106700	
Results						
Sq. m of Floorspace Created	134611	41000	100000	106200	247200	+83%
Gross Jobs Safeguarded	3426	1000	2300		3300	
Gross Jobs Created	5140	1600	3350		4950	
Impacts						
Net Jobs Safeguarded	1612	500	1000		1500	
Jobs Accommodated	8566	2600	4900	4881	12381	+45%
Net Jobs Created	2418	700	1500		2200	
Net GDP Added	£65.3m	£20.0m	£37.0m		£57.0m	
Net GDP Safeguarded	£43.5m	£13.0m	£25.0m		£38.0m	

The position on Measure 28, which is for Sheffield only, is similarly at this stage not specified. The Sheffield IDP assume that they will deliver the outcomes in the Programme Complement in exchange for the ERDF cash, though their plan notes that the figures are to be revised.

Although they are fundamentally sound, we have a number of detail comments which we suggest would improve the quality of the plans overall.

4.3 Specific Comments on Economic Aspects

4.3.1 Scope and Geographical Coverage

In relation to the scope of the plans Sheffield sets out an overall strategy for the city centre, only part of which is to be achieved through objective 1. Barnsley also clearly goes well beyond objective 1 and is notable for giving wider and explicit consideration to the role of other aspects of objective 1. The others are clearly more objective 1 focussed, although both recognise that some projects will be outside the scope of objective 1 funding.

The Geographical Coverage of the plans is mixed. Sheffield is clearly focussed on the city centre. The others extend beyond the town centres into the urban core to take in surrounding employment opportunity areas but the resulting areas are often awkward compromises. Two particular issues arise here :

- none of the delineations apparently takes account of how the likely resources available can best be concentrated;
- much of what is said about the role and development of public transport seems really focussed upon the town centres rather than the wider areas which are considered.

4.3.2 Baseline Data and Rationale for Intervention

In our view baseline data needs improvement: with more extensive range of indicators, referencing, years and details of source etc. Plans rightly provide specific data on their urban centres related to the specific objectives they have chosen, but **there is a core of data that should, we suggest, be presented in a common tabulated form across all four plans (we will provide a template for discussion).** This should not be an onerous task given the work that has already been done.

As we have hinted in Section 3.1 **the rationale for intervention adduced by each plan is essentially ‘our urban centre is in difficulty, therefore something must be done’.** But imbalances in labour, property and other markets are normally self-correcting in market economies, and the rationale for intervention ought to explain why markets have failed and how the intervention proposed will help to bring them back into balance.

4.3.3 The Supply Side

The supply side of the labour market is the most serious weakness in South Yorkshire’s economy. Many people lack the skills needed to work in the modern economy, either because they have acquired few marketable skills or because their current skills are redundant. Urban centres are mainly sources of labour demand rather than labour supply, so it is understandable that the plans focus on the demand side of the labour market². **They should, however, set out clearly how the supply side of the labour market will adjust to meet demand side change.** This will be in part through supply side programmes within the

² Supply side measures in other markets - notably property - are intended primarily to promote the demand side of the labour market by facilitating business growth.

plans, but mainly through other programmes, notably the ESF element of the Objective 1 programme. Many of the labour market assessments within the plans have a social focus but could usefully address higher level skills (critical to some of the functions that are being attracted).

4.3.4 Plan Linkages

Our analysis examined the interrelationships of the plans from several perspectives:

- **The links to the SEZs are not considered in depth in any of the strategies**, although in identifying target sectors – and in the former case the focus on small scale activities – the Barnsley, Sheffield and to a lesser extent Doncaster strategies implicitly differentiate their focus from that of the SEZs. The links with the SEZs are clearly particularly significant issues in relation to Barnsley and Doncaster.
- **The interlinkages between the IDPs could be developed further.** Beyond the references in some drafts to competition with Meadowhall, and arguments that proposed roles are complementary with that of Sheffield, none of the drafts considers the issue of potential competition between zones or the scale of the potential market for different types of development which the programmes can hope to tap.
- In relation to the external context, other than the references to the property market cycle in an annex to the Rotherham draft, none says anything much about their assumptions in relation to key aspects of the wider context within which the programmes are expected to be delivered.
- All of the drafts include extensive references to other aspects of the SPD and other strategies and they demonstrate a high level of consistency. However, none really highlights where the success of the strategy is dependent on other actions – such as upgrading of the strategic highway network - **and they tend not to say much about how far the programmes will help deliver other elements of the SPD** (in particular Priority 1). A key issue – which as noted only the Barnsley strategy picks up very explicitly – is how far other parts of objective 1 will help to deliver the visions for the urban centres.
- **In relation to “Supply Chain” linkages some of the strategies implicitly address this issue** to a degree in the nature of the activities – such as producer services – on which they focus. However, as the SPD is drafted it is mainly an issue in relation to the SEZs.
- **In relation to “Clusters” of economic activity**, this is most explicitly addressed in the Sheffield strategy. In the others it tends to be largely limited to an explicit or implicit focus on a town centre cluster or particular sectors.
- **Whilst linkages to target wards and access to opportunities are mentioned in most plans, specific mechanisms to achieve this have not always been identified** . Whilst

Sheffield has a relatively detailed transport strategy, and all of the others consider public transport and car parking to some degree, none of the strategies really addresses in much detail the issue of how the resulting job opportunities might best be linked to nearby areas of need or the barriers which need to be overcome if this is to be achieved.

4.3.5 Cross Cutting Themes

These are dealt with in some detail in Section 6.0. Our initial thoughts were that in relation to:

- **Sustainable Development.** Environmental issues receive only limited consideration beyond references to the need for public realm improvements and it is not clear – beyond the plans to further develop public transport – that the strategies have much to say about sustainable development more broadly. It is interesting that all recognise implicitly the need to improve car access. This is clearly realistic even if it sits uneasily with the sustainable development emphasis of the SPD.
- **Gender Equality.** None of the strategies really addresses this issue and, indeed, it will be difficult to do so in a convincing way within a physical development focussed approach. This is clearly an area for further thought/work.
- **ICT.** Again this is an issue which receives somewhat more limited attention than is warranted given the emphasis of the SPD. The strategies largely deal – and often in a limited way - with the physical/infrastructure aspects of the issue, with more limited consideration given to the question of the role of ICT and ICT support.

4.3.6 Delivery Issues and Private Sector Involvement

Delivery issues are clearly largely a key concern for the Part Bs. However, it is worth noting that the decision on State Aids and the possible exclusion of opportunities for gap funding of private developments may be a major constraint and it is not clear how any of the partnerships plan to tackle this.

Related to the above point, there is a sense that the partnerships here are largely public sector driven. The weaknesses of private sector in South Yorkshire means that this may be unavoidable but the effective engagement of the private sector will clearly be central to the success of the programmes. The SPD refers to the need for intervention to address market failure. The programmes typically provide data showing that private investment in sectors such as office development is not viable but tend not to consider the nature of the market failure or how it is to be overcome. This aspect will be explored further in the next Section (5.0).

5.0 PROPERTY AND TRANSPORT

The Zones in part have been created to address previous market failures and to encourage a 'step change' in economic terms. The degree to which these plans are achievable given current market conditions is critical. This section therefore gives our initial impression of the plans in property and market terms (Section 5.1).

We also examine how well each plan considers transportation issues in both a general and site specific sense (Section 5.2). Broadly speaking we would like to examine whether transportation issues and links are appropriate to support, accommodate and promote the proposed economic activities.

5.1 Property

The Part A plans generally relate to vision and strategy rather than the specifics of actual delivery. Primarily advice from Weatherhall Green and Smith on the property market and development issues will relate to the delivery of specific projects, the risks involved and whether they are realistic (ie Part B). Some of the plans, particularly Rotherham, are more property focused but at this stage our property comments on the draft Part A's are only brief and at a fairly general level.

5.1.1 Marketing, Supply Side Issues and Plan Integration

At present the Part A's are in varying stages of drafting and in slightly different formats. It will be clearer when the final documents have been prepared and can be read together with the Part B's, but they need to be clear so that owners, investors, developers and others can establish quickly and clearly what they need to do to qualify through the access Gateway criteria. **Clear information on the process and available benefits need to be marketed at an early stage as involvement of the private sector will give the best means of achieving the various objectives within the programmed time frame.**

Clearly the Plans relate to the supply side of the equation; the desire to regenerate certain areas for certain uses etc. However, a common theme across the whole area is a very flat property market. **A key concern is how the Plans intend to stimulate demand/ occupiers for such development areas (especially if there are limits to gap funding).** Whilst some plans refer to some research/evidence (eg the Hillier Parker and DTZ Pieda reports for Doncaster), it is difficult to see how they can be prepared without detailed studies into what is required, deliverability etc. Analysis needs to be undertaken to show that sufficient demand exists to take up accommodation in these areas at the comparatively low current market values. Similarly it is not always clear that there is sufficient evidence as to whether the developer/investor interest exists to fund such projects. At current values it is difficult to see how developments will take place in some areas even if land assembly, site reclamation

etc issues are addressed as market values are so low that it is difficult to generate the profit necessary to make it worthwhile.

From an initial examination of the Urban Centre Part A's there appears to be **limited integration across the urban areas**. Each centre is going for a regenerated evening economy together with urban living. Is there an overview for the region to target certain uses to certain specific areas and for complimentary uses to be located close by? It does seem on the first drafts that each of the urban centres is in competition with each other.

5.1.2 Regulation and Timeframes

The plans might not be able to change the market but they can change or influence the regulatory framework so as to encourage the market to operate. An example of this is the relaxing of licensing and planning regulations in Leeds a few years ago which stimulated the growth of the 24 hour city and the range of leisure opportunities open to people. With a vibrant centre the in town housing market was encouraged. Sheffield has lagged some way behind Leeds and Manchester in this but the size of the City, the diverse range of opportunities which could be supported by such a large conurbation and other issues such as transport congestion etc which help make this more attractive, mean this is a realistic objective. Our general perception is that this will be more difficult in the smaller urban areas but nonetheless the relaxation of the regulatory system can be used to stimulate this and other objectives. We suggest the IDP looks into how it may be able to inform the local regulatory framework or at least recognises the need for a system which is compatible with the development plans.

The Plans mostly make very little reference to any timetable for delivery of these objectives at this stage. There is a limited time for these measures and property and the development market in particular is a lengthy process. The Plans need to be clear over just what they are trying to achieve and that these objectives are reasonable in the time frame. The support of existing rolling programmes, the refurbishment of buildings and urban areas, and the investment in infrastructure are more likely to be achieved in the timetable than large scale comprehensive re-developments. Clearly we cannot comment on any of the proposals until the detail is provided but only Rotherham refers to existing programmes. Flagship schemes ("breakthrough initiatives") in all areas should be supported if viable.

5.1.3 Other Property Concerns

It may be picked up in other Priority Areas of the policy but it is our experience that the decision to locate a business into a particular area is not based mainly on property issues. In fact this can often be of lessor importance to the actual decision maker than provision of education (for children & adults), quality of town centre facilities, perceived image of the town, and the availability of suitable housing. The availability of an affordable and suitable

building and available qualified labour force are important but often not the ultimate reason for a re-location.

All Plans correctly identify the need to establish the ICT infrastructure, albeit to varying degrees. Again, the availability of services (often by more than one supplier) are essential when making location decisions.

5.2 Transport and Labour Mobility Assessment

Whilst the IPDs differ significantly all consider transport a key issue. However only two of the four plans appraised (Sheffield and Barnsley) address the issue in a strategic way.

Nevertheless all plans could be significantly enhanced from a transport point of view.

The following is a summary of the weaknesses common to all IDPs.

- **All plans would benefit from the provision of (further) data indicating the relative accessibility of different communities to the urban centre.** This would support the assertions they make that inaccessibility is a barrier to the uptake of employment opportunities for many residents.
- All plans would benefit from closer **integration / better explanation of fit with Local Transport Plan proposals** to establish to what extent the proposals are additional to those already planned.
- None of the plans have considered **the transport implications of proposed new clusters of economic activity.** **Freight access** issues are also overlooked.
- **None of the plans have gone beyond traditional infrastructure investments and service enhancements as a way of enhancing non-car based accessibility.** For instance there may be scope to encourage the take up of employer travel plans.
- Other than recognition of the need to provide enhanced access to deprived communities **other equity considerations (i.e. gender issues / safety) have generally not been addressed.**

6.0 CROSS CUTTING THEMES

We looked three key sets of cross-cutting issues:

- The Environment and Sustainability (Programme Themes One and Five);
- Equality and Inclusion (Programme Themes Two and Three); and,
- The Information Society (Programme Theme Four).

6.1 Environment and Sustainability

All the IDPs appear confused about how to address these issues, or indeed whether they are distinct issues. A statement about what the terms mean (even if only repetition from the SPD) would be a helpful addition to all the IPDs and one which would provide a basis for addressing them more fully.

In terms of environmental sustainability none of the plans demonstrate how the actions they propose will contribute towards environmental protection or encourage the more efficient use of natural resources (either individually or in aggregate). **Whilst all four plans promote physical environment improvement and propose urban design strategies, none fully address proactive measures to encourage resource efficiency** (e.g. waste minimisation, renewable energy or energy efficiency), although Doncaster's IDP does state it will promote green technologies in construction projects but it is not clear how.

6.1.1 Sustainable Development

All three plans would benefit from a short summary section demonstrating how they will positively contribute to all four sustainability objectives as stated in the Government's Quality of Life Strategy. All four plans should establish suitable monitoring framework against which performance against sustainability objectives can be measured.

There is a great deal of scope to promote sustainability through taking new innovative approaches to project design and delivery and recognising the wider benefits of certain initiatives (e.g. urban design to promote safe as well as pleasant environments). Whilst all the plans emphasise the importance of programmes of social inclusion and training to ensure the benefits of growth are shared by all, **none successfully demonstrate how they propose to take a proactive stance in securing new employment opportunities specifically for locally disadvantaged communities.**

6.2 Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion

There needs to be a clearer more rounded approach to the issues of equal opportunities and social inclusion. Whilst they all adhere to the principles of mainstreaming as indicated in the Single Programming Document and Programme Complement, they do more to achieve true mainstreaming of these issues. That is taking equal opportunities into account in the planning, design and implementation of the IDPs. By dissecting this definition, the IDPs could begin to address equal opportunities and social inclusion in a meaningful way.

Many IDPs state that equal opportunities have been taken into account and they could be further enhanced by distinct and separate actions that will take place to achieve this. In the majority of cases equal opportunities and social inclusion are dealt with within the same sphere. Further work would be useful to develop an approach that integrates equal opportunities and gender issues into the “hard” infrastructure projects such as through resident involvement and planning and design of sites and services. It is here that transport becomes a key issue and should be further explored.

In terms of a mainstreamed approach, the plans could demonstrate how the actions they propose could contribute to an achievement of the equal opportunities targets within the SPD. Sheffield and Barnsley are the most effective and have considered the issues through a more streamlined approach. Both these IDPs show how plan objectives follow through from those in the SPD. Whilst all plans mainly promote equal opportunities in a general sense they could also develop proactive measures to address inclusion issues (e.g. consultation, location and design of infrastructure, development of crèche facilities, job development for CED residents and women, particularly into managerial roles). This should be more evident at project level.

All four plans would benefit from a short section demonstrating how they will positively contribute to the four social criteria within the Programme Complement, despite being project related criteria, and specific outputs, indicators and targets in relation to equal opportunities within the SPD. They could also establish a suitable monitoring framework against which performance against gender mainstreaming, equal opportunities and social inclusion objectives can be measured.

We accept that it is difficult to promote equal opportunities and inclusion through infrastructure measures. However, the plans could attempt to do this in a more meaningful way by demonstrating for instance how they propose to secure jobs for residents within deprived communities or specific equal opportunities groups that are either within, or contiguous to the Urban Centre.

6.3 The Information Society

However, only the Barnsley plan provides a comment on the baseline position in ICTs (the data is taken from a survey that was undertaken by the local TEC). A quick look at the DTI website would have provided data on the regional position – although certainly on a broader scale – and studies which have looked at the relationship between different industries and their ICT needs. The IDPs could briefly mention some of this data within the statements on baseline positions.

ICTs are at the heart of what is understood as the knowledge based economy - in essence an economy in which the ability to generate, access, store and distribute knowledge will be key to competitive success. In ICT terms there is convincing evidence that we are entering the era of ubiquitous computing, the features of which will be the increasing commodification of computing power, further merging between computing, telecommunications and the production of content and the embedding of computing within a wide range of conventional industries such as textiles, building materials, footwear and clothing. Whilst the plans mention in general terms the need for ICT infrastructure they could say more about soft issues such as skills development and training and encouraging companies to take up ICT/e-commerce.

For this to take place will involve both profound economic as well as social change. Traditional sectors will need to be increasingly aware of the opportunities offered by ICTs and if they are to be successful many will need to move a long way from where they are at present. The table at the end of this section indicates some of the differences in use and ICT take-up for different sectors and could have formed the basis for some more detailed comments with each of the IDPs.

Other things that the IDPs should have brought out would have related to the more general observations about the nature of ICT use among companies of different sizes and therefore what this says about the economic structure within each region. For example, we know that large companies on average are more intensive and sophisticated users of ICTs than small ones. If we look at the Internet and other network type technologies, the pattern shows that the UK's larger businesses, those with more than 100 employees, are up with the best in the world in terms of adopting external networking technologies. Yet with the smaller companies, especially those below 10 employees, the record is far weaker.

The relationship between large and small companies can be very important. Large companies tend to act as a catalyst for the take-up of ICTs amongst their smaller companies and suppliers. This is important for regional differences in the take-up of ICT. London has 66% of the working population employed in large companies compared with 27% in Northern Ireland.

Some key findings about the relative adoption and use of ICTs by different UK sectors is as follows:

Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performs higher than average in most surveys of ICT penetration • Internet access and external e-mail penetration especially high – may be a reflection of the importance of client relationships to the sector and the use of the www as a valuable medium for advertising
Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently performs at higher than the UK average for all measures of ICT uptake companies • internal networking and external e-mail are widespread. • safety and environmental regulations require ICTs for monitoring purposes • high level of ICT skills and investment in training
Vehicle components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above average on the use of basic hardware and internal networking • below average in the use of internal email but extensive users of external email.
Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performs above the UK average in terms of basic hardware and infrastructure penetration • poor external networking
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very high level of ICT hardware – 74% of companies have over three quarters of employees using computers • networking and the use of EDI are well developed • more likely to be use of novel technologies such as videoconferencing
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently below the UK average for the penetration of basic ICTs • only 40% of companies use internal e-mail and significantly fewer than average are internally networked or use an intranet
Road Haulage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • below average take-up of ICTs and significant proportion of companies have no ICTs at all – 13% do not have a computer. • larger companies are moving towards integrated logistic services with a high degree of ICT sophistication • more extensive use of mobile technology and some use of tracking technology
Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • below the UK average in every measure of ICT use and connection – 20% of retailers do not have computers • low penetration of networked computers, intranets and extranet - only 33% of retailers have a website

7.0 SUMMARY

This summary provides an initial overview of the ex ante appraisal for the Integrated Development Plans (IDP's) for the first part of the Urban Centres. It intended only to give brief flavour of the plans and should read in conjunction with the more detail conclusions in Section 7.0.

Overall we feel that the plans are well written and provide a good working foundation. The plans embody a substantial amount of work. There is a sense of over complication in some areas, in others there is a need for shortening and sharpening so that the reader has a clear logical path through from the vision and aims/strategies/themes to clear targets and outcomes. For each of the plans it may be possible to summarise all of this information simply in a single illustration or diagram or through a succinct executive summary.

There could be more too in terms of simple and compelling original ideas that could form the basis for work in the years ahead. The rationale for intervention adduced by each plan is essentially 'our urban centre is in difficulty, therefore something must be done'. Our property analysis suggests that understanding the sources of market failure and how they might be addressed - mechanisms to overcome this and the engagement of the private sector will be critical.

Our view is that this could be backed up by more robust baseline data. Whilst the degree of detail between the plans varies the plans are alike in proposing sensible and relatively conventional measures to improve their respective urban centres. We would also expect Part B to deal with costs and outcomes more effectively and at least relate these to the Programme Complement at this stage. Based on existing data is likely that Priority 5 Measure 29 will be over bid for in funding and outputs terms.

All of the plans have made linkages to other parts of the programme and other strategies but generally do not say how Priority 5 funding will complement and add value to other activities/SEZs/Urban Centres. The plans tend, to varying degrees, to be over focused on the delivery of resources for Priority 5 rather than looking in a more holistic way at how a range of actions under objective one and other funding sources will come together to deliver their visions. The plans should, for instance, set out clearly how the supply side of the labour market will adjust to meet demand side change and how they will deliver other parts of the SPD.

The key issue from the property perspective is the stimulation of demand/ occupiers for such development areas. Part B will need to set out clearly how this interest and these actors will be engaged. Our transport specialist suggests that the plans all identify transport as a critical area and has made some suggestions for enhancements here (Section 5.2).

One of the weakest aspects of the plans is the links to cross cutting themes and the report makes some detailed comments and recommendations in each of the key areas in Section 6.0.

Whilst we recognise that this may be difficult in some areas (equality) we feel more can be done at this stage (for instance in relation to sustainability issues).

Our report concludes with some practical considerations for the preparation of Part B.