

iv) Competence in identifying and evaluating strategies

(Location removed) Policy Statement – *(region removed)* Regional Development Agency (RDA)

A key project in my work at the RDA was the preparation of the *(location removed)* Policy Statement. The purpose of the document was to function as a regeneration strategy to set out a sustainable economic vision for *(location removed)* and identify a series of policies which would support the realisation of this vision. The document would be adopted by the Agency as a formal policy document to inform planning policy, working with partners, and the allocation of funding. The document sought to address a broad range of spatial planning challenges that the area faced, including changes in the employment base, changes in tourism trends, problems of housing affordability, and new approaches to landscape management within the area.

The Agency had commissioned baseline research and visioning to underpin this piece of work. It was my role to use this evidence base to identify and evaluate strategies which would be included as policies within the policy statement. The thought process that supported the evaluation of particular strategies involved weighing a range of factors. These included the extent of the socio-economic problems as identified by the baseline research, the extent to which other partner organisations were already involved in delivering on this issue through other programmes, the strategic fit with the Regional Economic Strategy and RDA Corporate Plan, and the scope for the policy statement to bring added value to the policy process in this area. This was considered for each of the key issues identified through the baseline work, and supported the selection of the policies/strategies that would be included within the policy statement.

Corroborator A

The policy statement set a vision for *(location removed)* to be realised over the next 20 years. The extent to which the strategy supports the delivery of positive social, economic and environmental outcomes will therefore be realised over the longer term. The strategy was however welcomed by partner organisations such as *(name of organisation removed)* and the relevant local authorities and is being used as a basis to inform the allocation of RDA funding. The strategy is also being used to inform the development of planning policy, including the review of Regional Spatial Strategy and relevant Local Development Documents.

In relation to the rejected solutions that were not identified as priorities within the policy statement, many of these were identified as issues to be taken forward by other partners such as the local planning authorities or *(location removed)* Tourist Board. The course of action in relation to these rejected solutions will be more difficult to realise given that delivery will depend on the extent to which partners have the resources to take these forward. By setting a positive strategic vision however, the *(location removed)* study has been successful in influencing policy and decision making and this is likely to cascade down to deliver positive outcomes that will in part address some of the rejected solutions.

v) Competence in initiating action to implement strategies

(name removed) Study – *(location removed)* Regional Development Agency (RDA)

A key element of my role at RDA was project managing the *(name removed)* study which was commissioned as an evidence base to identify spatial planning and regeneration priorities for a number of identified historic centres within the region where the fuller realisation of their heritage assets could stimulate economic development and regeneration.

Carrobarator A.

The purpose of the strategy was to inform both planning policy and implementation. In terms of implementation this related to working with partner organisations including (*name removed*), local planning authorities, sub-regional tourist boards, and sub-regional partnerships in order to inform the development of their policies and business plans, and in doing so to inform the allocation of financial resources.

As the successful delivery of the strategy would depend on securing buy-in from partner organisations, effective communication to other professionals and stakeholders was critical to its implementation. This was achieved through engaging partners at an early stage in the process so that they had ownership of the final strategy. My own role in this process included setting up and co-ordinating a series of issues stage workshop events involving partners in identifying those towns and cities which would form the focus of the strategy. I was given a significant amount of responsibility in decision making at this stage in terms of developing the approach to the workshops and preparing all necessary materials to ensure the sessions ran effectively. The next stage involved managing the consultants and providing support in facilitating individual workshop events for each of the five identified towns and cities in order to undertake visioning work and identify key actions. These engaged both public and private sector partners, recognising that the early involvement of key local businesses and other private sector partners would be central to successful implementation. The final stage of my involvement involved communicating the strategy to key partners. An example of this included meetings with senior level professionals at (*organisation name removed*), and giving a presentation to the Chair of the (*location removed*) Heritage Lottery Fund. I also liaised with the RTPI Region to host a CPD update on Conservation and Heritage in the (*location removed*) which provided an opportunity to communicate the outcomes of the strategy to a wide professional audience.

Corroborated A

In developing the strategy and working towards implementation I had to respond to a range of external influences. There were extensive political implications involved, given the range of perspectives that informed the position of partner organisations. For example, there was a need for mediatory discussion with one local authority partner as the emerging prioritisation of actions within the strategy did not reflect their established position. In this I provided a supportive role to senior colleagues. The approach to implementing elements of the strategy therefore needed to be amended to reflect political implications. Time and financial limitations were also a central consideration in finalising the strategy. In project managing the commissioned consultancy work to support the development of the strategy it was my role to ensure the strategy was completed within the financial year 2005/06 given that the funding could not be carried across. I was also responsible for completing financial monitoring reports at key milestones throughout the process. Through responding to these external influences I ensured that the strategy was developed on time and within budget, and achieved a significant amount of buy-in from partner organisations.

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