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Dinnington fights back after damning verdict

A YEAR after parts of Dinnington were classed as being some of the most deprived in the country, the area is fighting back.

Business leaders say there is now a sense of optimism in the town amongst both residents and local businesses.

In the last year, a new Aldi supermarket and swimming pool has opened in the area and plans have also been passed to build dozens of new homes on derelict land in the heart of Dinnington.

Dominic Beck, policy and representation adviser for Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, said there has been investment in the town which will help increase economic activity and reduce unemployment.

He said: "Dinnington was decimated by the closure of the mining industry in the 1990s and the associated supply chains that relied heavily upon the sector."

"Since then in Dinnington, the local authority, community groups, small businesses and indeed multi-national companies in the form of Tesco and, more recently, Aldi have invested in the town and provided a catalyst to increase economic activity, reduce long-term unemployment through new and sustainable employment opportunities and raise the aspirations of local people."

"It is true that we have a long way to go, but certainly with the new Aldi store, a new swimming pool reopened and community spirit as strong as it has been for years, there is certainly a sense of optimism in the town, amongst both its residents and local businesses - many of whom are chamber members."

"In times of economic austerity it is vital that businesses in towns such as Dinnington show the rest how you can buck the trend whilst at the same time not forgetting that the residents and the local services they can access is the priority."

Last year's report for the South Yorkshire Rural Network said the Dinnington central, east, north east and north west all feature in the top 10 per cent most deprived areas in the country, as well as North Anston central, Woodsetts and Harthill south.

The report's author Peter Foyle said: "It is no surprise that areas within Dinnington and North Anston show high levels of unemployment, poor health and low income."

"However, to experience this in areas a long bus ride away from employment, health or training services makes life much harder."

He urged service providers to consider these factors as they try to deal with massive budget cuts and look at different ways of providing services rather than centralising or rationalising them.

Tina Chamberlain, regional development manager for Rural Action Yorkshire, said the new 75-home housing development, planned for derelict land off East Street, 'is positive, as long as there is provision for housing within the development that local people can afford.

She added: "Of course, in the current economic climate, statutory agencies have to make difficult decisions in terms of service delivery and rural areas are particularly vulnerable to cuts in services due to the extra cost of delivery in areas away from the town centre."

"It is therefore, important that any changes to service delivery take into account rural communities and look at ways of 'rural proofing' policies so that people living there, and particularly those with high levels of need, are not disadvantaged."

Ms Chamberlin felt at the Localism Bill may also provide opportunities for communities to deliver some local services themselves through the Right to Challange and Right to Bid.