

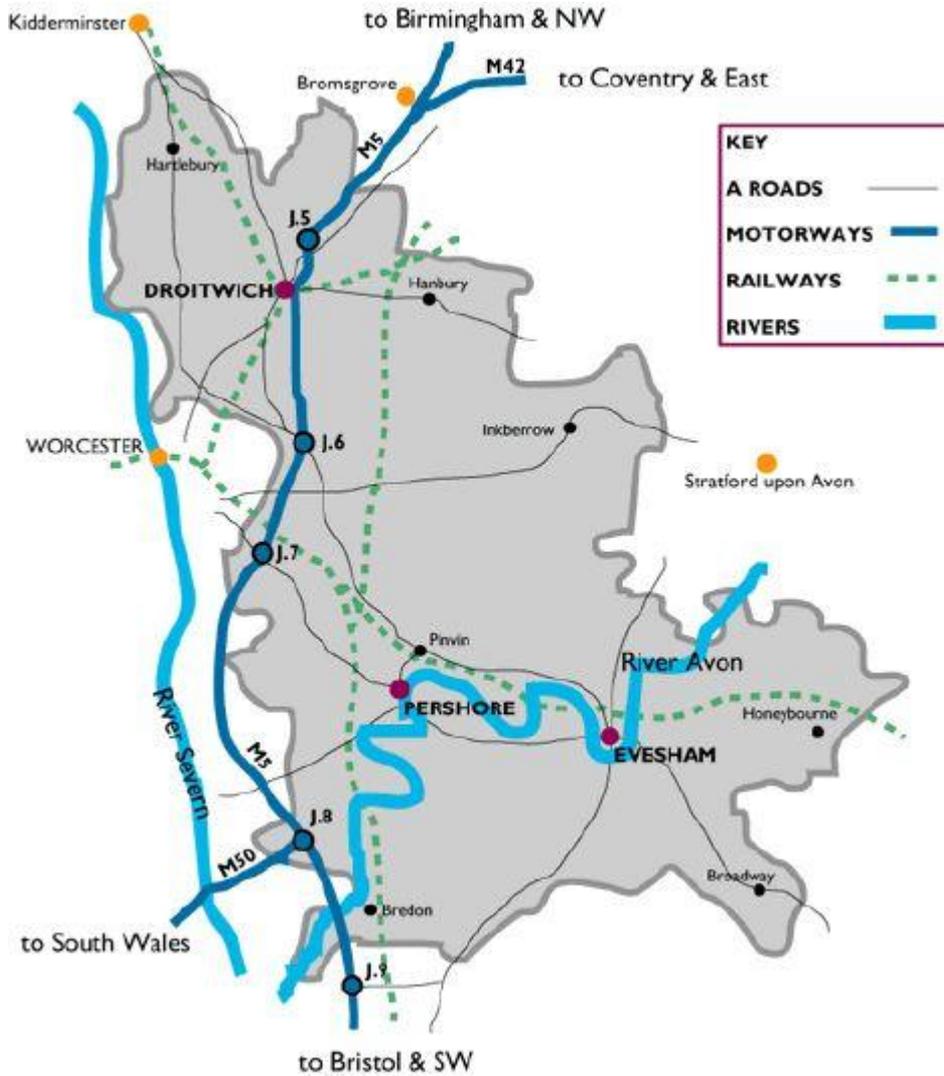
The Heart of Horticulture - why Wychavon District Council is involved

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Context – where is Wychavon



What does a 'regeneration team' do?

- Tourism
- Events and festivals, farmers markets, local food support
- Town Centre Management – currently bidding to be a 'Portas Pilot'
- Start up and boosters grants for businesses
- Marketing, inward investment & supporting relocations
- Business information and directories
- Signposting to grants, loans and business support
- Support for businesses with planning application and in other regulatory services
- Funding to support business parks – eg joint ventures
- Broadband – helping get superfast broadband across the county
- Strategic influence on planning policies
- Grants to community groups
- Support and information for migrant communities

It's all about the economy

Why horticulture?

- Agriculture, manufacturing and food distribution jointly account for about 30% of the local economy
- It's not always seen sympathetically by the public
- It is a success story but faces challenges
- Various studies have shown areas where council support could be helpful and the importance of the sector – research studies since 2003 including the importance of migrant labour to the sector
- Major issues for growers relating to labour and in particular the Gangmasters Licensing Authority
- There is a clear link between the production of key crops eg plums and asparagus and festivals we promote

Why the heart of horticulture?

Study aims

- Raise robust statistics on the value and impact of the sector
- Provide an assessment of sector competitiveness and viability
- Identify the key issues that need to be addressed by the sector in the next 10 years

Why the heart of horticulture from an economic development perspective?

Strategic

Influence – Government, Local Enterprise Partnership, or LEPs: get a voice at the table

Practical

Planning applications – quoting **hard facts** can make a difference especially with the economy being given higher profile in planning matters. Locals may have views – but facts are what matter.

PR

Combat the NIMBYs, win over local doubters, get them onside and understanding what a great sector this is and what employment and career opportunities there are for all. This has to be something that the sector does – public sector can support but not drive.

Findings

The West Midlands horticultural sector:

- Occupies 3% of regional land area
- Contributes 20% of regional agricultural output
- Has a farmgate value of £350m
- Has a Gross Value Added contribution to the region in excess of £600m

The West Midlands horticultural sector produces over:

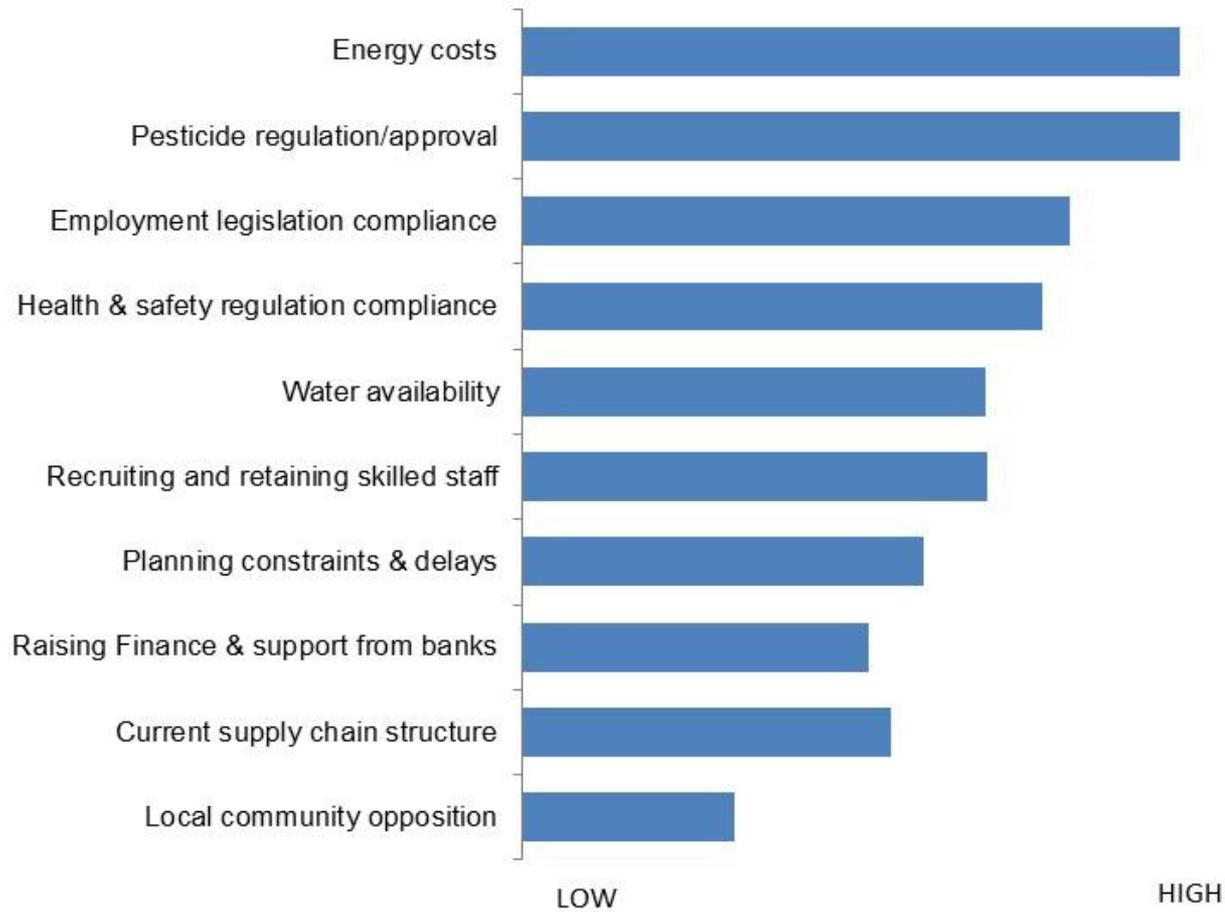
- 65% of UK asparagus
- 60% of UK cider apples
- 35% of UK blackcurrants
- 20% of UK soft fruit
- 13% of UK potatoes

The West Midlands horticultural sector creates employment

- For over 6,000 full time workers and family labour to grow the crops
- For over 7,000 part time workers principally to support planting and harvesting
- For at least 7,000 full time jobs in processing and manufacturing
- For a large number of businesses and people involved in transport and distribution

Key challenges

Business Threats



Two quick snapshots from main report

UK consumer demand for asparagus is rising by 12-14% annually whilst production is increasing by 7%. So not all the increasing demand is met by UK produce.

For a small period in the summer, the UK is 73% self sufficient in strawberry production

Inference from these points – with support, ie from banks, planning authorities, the environment agency and others, the sector could grow more UK produce to satisfy customer demand.

Adam Henson, Henry Sandon, Trevor Harrison, Hedli Nicklaus, The Asparamancer and the Lord Lieutenant all help show Evesham in a great light!



Action plan

- Foster grower cooperation and vertical supply chain partnerships
- Take advantage of the EU Fruit and Vegetable Scheme
- Make sure the sector has access to flexible labour
- Provide high quality training and career opportunities
- Build water storage capacity alongside efficient water usage
- Exploit the potential of renewable energy
- Ensure public bodies work alongside the sector to support its development
- Build strong research and development partnerships

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Full report and summary at

http://www.effp.com/whoweworkwith/WestMidlands/hort_report.aspx

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