

6.1 Rebranding places

In this unit you'll find out what 'rebranding places' is all about.

Why rebrand Doncaster?

Doncaster, in South Yorkshire, has been hit hard by industrial change. Its traditional coal mining and engineering industries have declined, and high unemployment and derelict land characterise the area. Outlying mining villages, such as Rossington, have traditionally had little to offer residents except coal mining and, therefore, when Rossington pit closed in 2006, there were few other jobs available.

Rossington's community newsletter commented that 'job-seekers from Rossington pit are being offered alternative employment ... as beauty and nail technicians!'. The lack of suitable alternative jobs has resulted in social and economic deprivation, affecting both people's health and wealth. A big problem in Rossington is the high percentage of people without qualifications.

Rossington and Doncaster need more full-time jobs. How can this be achieved? Rebranding is one way. Doncaster and its industrial past need to be re-shaped so that new companies will invest there.

How can Doncaster be rebranded?

More than 11,000 people signed a petition opposing the name of South Yorkshire's new airport. The former RAF Finningley is being redeveloped into a commercial airport and has been named Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield Airport by its owners. But Councillor John Mounsey is leading the campaign to get the name changed to Doncaster Finningley Airport. An airport official said rebranding would bring prosperity to the area.

Councillor Mounsey said "We are fully behind the airport, but they should have consulted people before they came up with the name. We're the ones who are going to use this airport - it's our town."

Sharon Bennett, the airport's marketing and community manager said "The name Robin Hood is welcomed by the public. The name has to raise awareness of the airport, and of the whole area. If Robin Hood Airport is to bring jobs it has to have some commercial impact."

● **Rebranding** is the way or ways in which a place is re-developed and marketed so that it gains a new identity. It can then attract new investors and visitors.

Rossington compared with Doncaster

Children in households with no wage earner	+46%
People with poor general health	+26%
Single parents	+30%
People with no qualifications	+30%
People not employed	+30%
Households with no car	+17%

▲ *Socio-economic indicators – Rossington compared with the Doncaster average. These figures are from the 2001 Census. Doncaster as a whole is one of the most deprived places in the UK, but Rossington is even worse off – these figures mean that, for instance, there are 30% more unemployed people, single parents and people with no qualifications in Rossington than in Doncaster.*



▲ Robin Hood Airport, Doncaster

Should traditional industries be kept alive, even if they are losing money?

What do you think?

▲ Can Robin Hood save South Yorkshire?

Background

Why do places need to rebrand?

Places need to rebrand because of economic change.

Two factors have caused this:

- The decline in primary and secondary industries.
- The growth of tertiary industries, particularly tourism.

Industry in decline ...

In the 1980s, the British government planned changes to the British economy. Goods produced by the UK's primary industries (e.g. mining) and secondary (manufacturing) companies were more expensive than those produced overseas. For instance:

- British coal is deeper underground and more expensive to mine than elsewhere.
- The UK's wages were also higher than overseas, making British products more expensive. The growth of manufacturing in Asia, with its cheaper workforce, led to cheaper imported goods.

Large numbers of mines and secondary industries closed during the 1980s. These changes caused huge unemployment in the north and Midlands.

Relic feature	Rebranded as
Industrial past	'Industrial Heritage' environments, e.g. Ironbridge, Shropshire
Derelict land and docks	Brownfield sites for re-building and expansion of office space, e.g. London docklands
	Waterside locations for new housing, e.g. Leeds canal side
Old factories and warehouses	Loft apartments, e.g. Birmingham canal side Shopping centres, e.g. Fort Dunlop, West Midlands

▲ Different ways of rebranding industrial sites

Over to you

- 1 Draw a spider diagram to outline why Rossington has suffered deprivation.
- 2 What is wrong with offering employment as 'beauty and nail technicians' in Rossington?
- 3 a How might Doncaster's new airport help in 'rebranding' the area?
b What risks are there in this attempt to rebrand?
- 4 Look at the table above. Use the same headings and complete a table for your area, or a locality that you know.



▲ Liverpool docks – rebranding former wharves and warehouses as luxury apartments, shops, cafes/restaurants, and a marina for private vessels

... the growth of tertiary industries

To replace the lost jobs, the government encouraged growth in a new 'post-industrial' economy. This includes:

- 'knowledge' industries – using expertise in design, process, IT, and consultancy
- banking and finance – international banks using the UK as a base to finance global investment
- tourism – the world's fastest-growing industry.

These sectors can locate anywhere; they are 'footloose'. Decisions about where to locate are often made on preference, the quality of the environment, and financial incentives. Image is important.

The growth in tourism has resulted from greater prosperity in MEDCs, cheaper air travel and increased

car ownership. Many areas of the UK and Europe have been cashing in, creating tourist attractions. Some attractions are new, like the London Eye, while other places have sought to rebrand their past – creating a new image. Former industrial areas hope that this will bring economic growth.

On your own

Understanding the text

- 5 Define these words: rebrand, post-industrial economy, knowledge industries, footloose industries
- 6 Research a local area that has suffered decline, and outline how you would rebrand it.