

# Local Development Scheme



April 2006

**Wyre Forest District**  
**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

**April 2006**



For more information contact:

Wyre Forest District Council  
Forward Planning Section  
Duke House  
Clensmore Street  
Kidderminster  
DY10 2JX

Tel. 01562 732549

Email: [forward.planning@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:forward.planning@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

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## 1. PREFACE

- 1.1 In December 2001 the Government published (*'Planning: delivering a fundamental change'*) its intention to radically overhaul the planning system and in particular the preparation of development plans. The main ambition behind the changes is the creation of a speedier and more responsive planning system encompassing a broader spatial dimension.
- 1.2 The recent planning reforms follow other significant changes for local governance including the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000. Taking these changes into account, the District Council has worked together with other stakeholders through 'Wyre Forest Matters' (Local Strategic Partnership) to prepare a Community Strategy (2004-2014) for the District. A review of this ten-year strategy is anticipated for 2006-2007 and the District Council is required to consider its implications when preparing Planning Policies for the area.
- 1.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Part 2) came into effect on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2004 and replaced the old style development plans (County Structure Plan and District Local Plan) with a system of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks.
- 1.4 For the West Midlands, the Regional Spatial Strategy is prepared by the West Midlands Regional Assembly with involvement at a sub-regional level from the County Councils.
- 1.5 Wyre Forest District Council is now required to prepare a Local Development Framework to provide the vision for and to guide the development of the District during the next 15 years. Worcestershire County Council will maintain responsibility for Waste and Minerals planning and will be required to prepare a Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework for the County.
- 1.6 In January 2004 a new District Local Plan was adopted to take the District forward up to 2011. This ensures an up-to-date planning framework is in place during the transition to the new system. Under transitional arrangements the policies of the District Local Plan and the County Structure Plan will be 'saved' for a period of at least three years\*.
- 1.7 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act provides a fresh approach and a chance to think more roundly about the key opportunities to achieving more sustainable

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\* 'Saved' plans and policies are those adopted under previous legislation. These automatically retain their Development Plan status for a period of at least three years to 27<sup>th</sup> September 2007 or earlier if replaced by a new Development Plan Document.

development. The new system no longer limits the statutory Development Plan to purely land-use matters but rather seeks to ensure that the Local Development Frameworks consider the 'bigger picture' on issues such as social welfare, economy and environment.

- 1.8 The Local Development Scheme is required under Section 15 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act to be prepared by the relevant Local Planning Authority. This scheme sets out the intentions of the District Council as Local Planning Authority over a three-year timeframe, providing a programme for the preparation and review of the various Local Development Documents that will make up the Local Development Framework to guide the development of the District up to 2026.
- 1.9 The first LDS was formally submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2005 and came into effect on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2005. A revised LDS, which incorporated a minor amendment to the timetable for the Statement of Community Involvement, was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2005 and came into effect on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2005. Following on from the submission of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report in December each year, it is considered appropriate to review the Local Development Scheme and to role forward proposals to ensure that they are still current and cover the three year time period.
- 1.10 The key proposed changes made as part of this review are the reprogramming of the Core Strategy DPD, with consequential amendments to the Site Allocations, Development Control Policies and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan DPDs. Also, the Council had proposed an SPD on affordable housing; however this will now form part of a wider 'Planning Obligations' Supplementary Planning Document.

## 2. Introduction

2.1 This Local Development Scheme is designed to give the local community and all those interested in the future development of Wyre Forest District the following information:

- The current planning policies to be applied in the area
- The programme for reviewing these policies through the preparation of a Local Development Framework

2.2 The basis for preparing the Local Development Scheme is laid down in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the accompanying Regulations.

2.3 The Local Development Scheme is a three year programme of work to advance 'spatial planning' in the district to be subject to annual monitoring and review. The Local Development Scheme may be reviewed more frequently if necessary.

2.4 The consideration of 'Spatial planning' goes beyond land use planning and includes issues of social welfare and economic prosperity which the government is keen to see woven into the statutory Development Plan process as a means of delivering the sustainability agenda.

2.5 When reviewing the Local Development Scheme, the District Council will consult both with Government Office for the West Midlands and the Planning Inspectorate.

2.6 At present the Planning Policies for the District are contained in the following documents:

- ❖ Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) of June 2011, now known as the Regional Spatial Strategy;
- ❖ Worcestershire County Structure Plan (June 2001);
- ❖ Wyre Forest District Local Plan (January 2004) and;
- ❖ Hereford and Worcester Minerals Local Plan (1997).

### **3. Regional Spatial Strategy & Worcestershire County Structure Plan**

3.1 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) was approved by the First Secretary of State in June 2004 and following the commencement of the 2004 Act it has become the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the West Midlands Region. The RSS covers the period up to 2021 and now forms part of the statutory 'Development Plan' for the District together with Worcestershire Structure Plan (1996-2011), the Wyre Forest District Local Plan and the Hereford & Worcester County Minerals Local Plan. Future Local Development Documents will be required to be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy. The recent review of Regional Planning Guidance identified the need for an early partial review following more detailed research in order to provide additional clarification about Shire District housing and employment needs up to 2026. Ultimately, the Regional Spatial Strategy will replace the Worcestershire County Structure Plan.

#### **4. Wyre Forest District Local Plan (January 2004)**

4.1 The Local Plan continues to provide the detailed basis for considering development proposals in the district. The policies of the Local Plan are intended to be saved until at least the end of 2008 when the provisions of the Plan will start to be replaced by a suite of Development Plan Documents (see below). In the meantime, all of the 214 Policies of the Local Plan are considered to be up-to-date and generally consistent with the Regional Spatial Strategy and national guidance and policy statements. Through the Local Development Scheme, the majority if not all of the policies in the Local Plan will be replaced by fewer policies or land use allocations in one of the following Development Plan Documents:

- ❖ Core Strategy
- ❖ Development Control Policies
- ❖ Site specific allocations of land
- ❖ Proposals Map

Appendix D provides an indication of how each of the 214 existing policies are expected to be incorporated into the Local Development Framework.



## **5. Supplementary Planning Guidance**

5.1 In certain instances during the last four years, the District Council has found it necessary or helpful to prepare additional guidance to further clarify Local Plan policy. These documents have been formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and as such can be afforded some weight as part of the decision making process. However, they fall outside the statutory Development Plan which is the principal consideration in law.

5.2 All existing Supplementary Planning Guidance relates to a policy or policies in the Local Plan and will remain 'saved' until such time as the applicable Local Plan policy is reviewed and replaced as part of the preparation of the Local Development Framework. Once the key policies are replaced in the Development Plan Documents, the Supplementary Planning Guidance may need to be translated into 'Supplementary Planning Documents' (see section 9, below).

## 6. *New Local Development Documents – Supporting Statement*

6.1 The remainder of this Local Development Scheme will consider the preparation of new Local Development Documents proposed by the District Council and these are set out in more detail in Appendix A (Programme Management Timetable) and Appendix B (LDD profiles & milestones). The proposed Local Development Documents that follow are sub-divided into three main categories, namely:

- ❖ Statement of Community Involvement
- ❖ Development Plan Documents and;
- ❖ Supplementary Planning Documents.

6.2 In considering the content and preparation of the Local Development Documents, they will be further sub-divided into timelines. This Local Development Scheme is primarily focussed on a programme of work for the next three years (1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009). Therefore, those documents to be prepared in the period 2006 to 2009 will be considered first and in more detail to those envisaged for post-March 2009.

6.3 This Local Development Scheme is a programme for the preparation of the documents of the Local Development Framework (LDF). However, as suggested in Para. 5.7 of the Companion Guide to Planning Policy Statement 12 (ODPM, 2004), the timelines set out within Appendix A of the Local Development Scheme are at this stage only indicative. The key dates assume the timely partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy that will inform the scoping of the Local Development Documents and provide the necessary guidance on housing and employment development for the district up to 2026. Therefore, the timetable will need to be reviewed to reflect any changing circumstances that come to light in the first few years of the new system being in operation.

6.4 A number of other technical studies will be undertaken by the District Council to inform the preparation of the Local Development Documents e.g. Retail and Commercial Leisure Study, Housing Land Availability Assessment and Open Space Study.

## **7. Statement of Community Involvement**

7.1 The District Council is awaiting the Inspectors Report into the submission version of the Statement of Community Involvement. The draft proposals provide the guidelines and minimum standards that the community and interest groups can expect when Local Development Documents are being prepared. The Statement of Community Involvement also clarifies the community participation and public consultation arrangements for the determination of Planning Applications. Subject to receipt of the Inspectors Report in March 2006 it is envisaged that the SCI will be adopted in April 2006.

## 8. Development Plan Documents

### 2006 to 2009

8.1 It is envisaged that the provisions of the Local Plan will be replaced through the preparation of four main Development Plan Documents. The research to underpin these documents and preparation including public participation in line with the Statement of Community Involvement will form a significant element of the first 3 years of this Local Development Scheme work programme.

#### a) Core Strategy

8.2 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document will set out the District Council's vision, key objectives and a spatial strategy for the District up to 2026 and will contain strategic policies to deliver these objectives.

#### b) Development Control Policies

8.3 A suite of issue-specific development control policies for the district will be included as a separate Development Plan Document. The policies will cover the whole, or particular parts of, the area e.g. advertisement policy or flood risk. Having this type of policy in a self contained DPD will ensure they can be reviewed as required.

#### c) Site Allocations

8.4 The Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) will contain policies that specifically apply to a given area or site. It will identify the housing and employment sites to meet the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the Plan period to 2026 and will provide a land-use framework for regeneration initiatives. Specifically, the Site Allocation DPD will allocate and designate areas of land for particular uses (e.g. areas of primarily residential use) or environmental protection (e.g. Green Belt). The Site Allocations DPD will include policies and controls to be applied in particular areas. This will provide the basis for more site-specific work including Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents.

d) Proposals Map

8.5 The Proposals Map will indicate the spatial extent of policies and proposals to be prepared and maintained to accompany all Development Plan Documents. Due to the complexity and number of documents involved, the Proposals Map will be electronically prepared and maintained to ensure that it remains up to date at all times.

*Area Action Plans*

8.6 In addition to the above, the District Council can also prepare Area Action Plans to provide a detailed planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. Area Action Plans are designed to help in one or a number of the following areas:

- deliver planned growth areas;
- stimulate regeneration;
- protect areas particularly sensitive to change;
- resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressure or;
- focus on the delivery of area based regeneration initiatives.

8.7 In addition to the redevelopment of sites at Severn Road, Stourport on Severn, there are two other areas of significant regeneration potential in the period to 2026, those being:

- i. Central Kidderminster - focussed on the town centre and;
- ii. Stourport Road Employment Corridor (SREC) in Kidderminster.

e) Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan

8.9 It is envisaged that Kidderminster Town Centre will continue to be a focus of major change. With numerous possible opportunity sites, heritage assets and the need to continue economic diversification, the on-going renaissance of Kidderminster Town Centre is a major issue to be addressed in the Local Development Framework.

8.10 The District Council has recently prepared a strategic Economic Regeneration Strategy for Kidderminster in consultation with the Government Office for West Midlands and the Regional Development Agency (Advantage West Midlands). This document highlights the need for a targeted approach to combat social deprivation in the Horsefair/ Broadwaters community and enable appropriate regeneration. This has also been earmarked as an emerging priority by 'Wyre Forest Matters' (the Local Strategic

Partnership). Therefore, given the economic and social importance of the central area, early preparatory work on an Area Action Plan will be progressed from 2006.

8.11 In terms of land use, the Area Action Plan will have a key role to play in clarifying the regeneration potential of sites in the area. In addition, the document will also look beyond land use to consider key themes including accessibility, the evening economy, 'city living', enhanced public realm and improved synergy between the town centre and nearby communities. In looking at these links, the plan will also consider opportunities adjacent to the town centre in neighbourhoods such as Horsefair that can deliver improved connectivity and accessibility (physically, socially and economically).

### **Post 2009**

#### f) Regeneration in the Stourport Road Employment Corridor, Kidderminster

8.12 An area where considerable change is anticipated both in the physical environment (redevelopment of the former British Sugar Factory and Folkes Forge) and provision of services to tackle deprivation issues. The 'Oldington and Foley Park Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder' (Part of the ODPM's Neighbourhood Renewal Initiative) has been established to tackle social inequality and service delivery and the Area Action Plan will contribute by providing a focus and delivery vehicle for any implementation plan.

































