

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
THURSDAY 24TH AUGUST 2006

Worcestershire Tourism Destination Partnership
“Destination Worcestershire”

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY	Shared Prosperity
THEME	
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Promoting Economic Prosperity
KEY PRIORITY:	Tourism
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor S J Clee
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Economic Development and Tourism Manager (extension 2752)
APPENDICES	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the proposals to establish “Destination Worcestershire”, a new public / private sector partnership to develop, market and improve Worcestershire’s tourism economy throughout the year.
- 1.2 To confirm this Council’s level of contribution to “Destination Worcestershire.”

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

- 2.1 **The proposals to establish “Destination Worcestershire” be supported.**
- 2.2 **The Council’s level of contribution be a maximum of £10,000 for the next three years, to be met out of the existing and future tourism budgets.**
- 2.3 **A further contribution be made of up to £10,000 in value to be provided by means of support services from the Council’s Tourism Officer.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Advantage West Midlands (AWM), the Regional Development Agency, is responsible for the strategic delivery of tourism within the Region.
- 3.2 Tourism West Midlands (TWM) operates within AWM as the organisation charged with supporting the development of tourism within the region. In 2004, AWM

published a West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy which includes a commitment to deliver strategic sub regional (i.e. County wide) “Destination Partnerships” to secure the benefits of real shared working between the public and private sectors and to effectively promote the tourism businesses and attractions in their areas.

3.3 TWM has adopted a range of core criteria for DP’s which include:

- Operating a membership structure, bringing together public and private partners.
- Work within a formal agreement which runs over an extended period of time (e.g. several years).
- Deliver an agreed business plan.
- Reduce duplication of public expenditure and clarify marketing messages.
- Be signed up to the Quality at Heart (the tourism industry’s quality assurance scheme), promote visitor attractions and provide the importance of quality and pride of place.

3.4 Worcestershire Partnership (the County Local Strategic Partnership) has considered the implications of the West Midlands Regional Visitor Economy Strategy and is now committed to developing a DP for the County, the rationale for which is:-

- To maximise the economic potential of the tourism sector
- To make effective use of public resources
- To be an effective delivery mechanism

3.5 As a consequence of Worcestershire Partnership’s commitment, the County Council commissioned consultants to advise on the options for a Destination Partnership.

4 THE WAY FORWARD

4.1 The DP for Worcestershire – which is to be known as “Destination Worcestershire” will be responsible for:

- All aspects of marketing Worcestershire as a tourism destination.
- Improving information provision.
- Provide a platform for integrating the work of the tourist information centres.
- Develop on-line information and accommodation and attraction booking.
- Support quality development in the industry.
- Act as a voice for the industry, lobbying and influencing on infrastructure and policy issues.

5. DESTINATION WORCESTERSHIRE - STRUCTURE

5.1 Destination Worcestershire will be a membership organisation operating under the direction of a public / private partnership Board which will comprise:

- an independent tourism industry chair
- two tourism industry representatives
- two representatives from major institutions
- two local authority representatives

- the head of the Destination Worcestershire

5.2 The organisation will be an industry membership organisation incorporating existing tourism associations within the County and operating through a federal approach to enable information from a particular locality (eg Wyre Forest District) to be fed to and from a central core.

5.3 Initially Destination Worcestershire will be funded and supported by the County Council and the 6 District authorities through rolling service level agreements for a three year period.

5.4 It is proposed that Destination Worcestershire will employ three full time staff with part time seconded tourism officers (existing County / District staff).

6. RECOGNITION BY TWM

6.1 In July 2006, and following a submission made on behalf of Worcestershire Partnership, TWM gave full recognition status to Destination Worcestershire. Such status recognises that the core criteria referred in 3.3 above have been satisfied.

6.2 Such recognition means that Destination Worcestershire is eligible to apply for "Challenge Funding", to support tourism development in the sub regions - though this funding will not provide the organisations core funding.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL

7.1 Destination Worcestershire's annual running costs will be around £300,000 which can be funded on a shared basis through the County and District local authorities' existing tourism budgets and / or providing "in kind" support through existing tourism officer staff.

7.2 It is envisaged that initially, up to 50% of the Council's Tourism Officer's existing time will be spent within Destination Worcestershire, probably on a secondment basis.

7.3 In addition, the Council will contribute up to £10,000 per annum for the next three years towards the new organisation from within existing budgets.

7.4 Bewdley Tourist Information Centre will continue to be operated and managed directly by the Council's Tourism Officer.

8. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Destination Worcestershire will be a legally constituted and regionally recognised partnership organisation.

8.2 The objective to develop a single destination partnership for Worcestershire is part of the Council's Economic Development and Tourism Plan 2005/2007 and is identified within the Strategy and Performance Unit's Business Plan 2006/2007.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 There are no significant risk management issues arising from this report.

10. CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Local Authorities are at the very heart of destination management and the DP will not function successfully without the support from their local council.

10.2 Destination Worcestershire is the way forward for the strategic and integrated delivery of tourism within both the County and the West Midlands region. A robust business plan and partnership structure has been developed and, with the support of the private sector, will secure the future delivery of tourism development to benefit the local, regional and national economy.

11. CONSULTEES

- Corporate Management Team

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy 2004.