

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
25TH JANUARY 2007

Update on the Wyre Forest Matters Community Strategy 2004 - 2014

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Providing Community Leadership
KEY PRIORITY:	Community Strategy
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Stephen Clee
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	Tracy Reck, ext 2792 tracy.reck@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the implementation of the Wyre Forest Matters Community Strategy and its forthcoming review.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:

- 2.1 **The progress made by the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership in the implementation of the Community Strategy (2004-2014) be noted.**
- 2.2 **The forthcoming review of the Wyre Forest Matters Community Strategy be noted.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Wyre Forest Matters, the Local Strategic Partnership, was established in March 2002 to develop and implement a Community Strategy for the Wyre Forest District.
- 3.2 The production and implementation of a Community Strategy is a statutory requirement placed on all Councils under the Local Government Act 2000 and should aim to improve the social, economic, health and environmental wellbeing of the area and its inhabitants.
- 3.3 A ten-year Community Strategy for the Wyre Forest District "*Helping to Transform your Life*" (2004-2014) was launched in April 2004.
- 3.4 Performance of Partnership activity is monitored by the Wyre Forest Matters Strategic Board on a quarterly basis. The District Council's representatives on the Board are

the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive respectively.

3.5 Since the launch of the Community Strategy, much has been achieved locally and there have been numerous developments in the national context including:

- a) A national evaluation of Community Strategies
- b) Introduction of Local Area Agreements (LAA)
- c) Development of the neighbourhoods agenda
- d) Introduction of Local Development Frameworks
- e) The Local Government White Paper 2006 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill 2006.

4. PROGRESS

4.1 On 4th December 2006, a delivery plan for the Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill areas of Kidderminster was approved in principle by the Wyre Forest Matters Strategic Board. This project will be a key area of focus for the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership over the next two and a half years, and will include activity around all the key Themes within the Community Strategy and make a significant contribution to achieving the Local Public Service Agreement Targets (second generation) for the District.

4.2 In addition, the Theme Leads and partners continue to deliver a range of strategic and operational activity. Some key achievements, which the Partnership has been involved in, are outlined below:

a) Shared Prosperity

- I. Stourport-on-Severn Market Towns Initiative – completed the Public Realm Strategy for the town centre and riverside area, to include proposals for street furniture, surface treatment and lighting
- II. Completed application to Advantage West Midlands for funding to facilitate the regeneration of Bridge St, Stourport-on-Severn
- III. Developed marketing plan to promote both the area and the opportunities being developed in the district and in particular on Stourport Road, Worcester Road and Kidderminster Town Centre

b) Safer Communities

- I. Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership held a candlelit vigil outside Kidderminster Town Hall on Friday 24th November 2006 to mark the launch of the 16 days of action campaign against domestic violence
- II. A number of community events have taken place including Inside Justice Week at Kidderminster Magistrates Court and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's Home Safe Home event
- III. WFCSP funded and supported the establishment of Asha Wyre Forest, a one stop shop for disadvantaged women situated in the Horsefair/Broadwaters area of Kidderminster, which opened in October 2006
- IV. Working in partnership with the local media, WFCSP secured a six weeks press campaign in the Kidderminster Shuttle, Times and News. This raised awareness of community safety issues which were pertinent to the summer holiday period.

c) A Better Environment

- I. 4,600 energy saving light bulbs and water hogs are being distributed by Councillors to householders in the Wyre Forest District. By replacing conventional bulbs with the 4,600 free energy saving bulbs Wyre Forest District households will save over 100 tonnes of carbon
- II. 16 individuals from partner organisations from across the district attended Affordable Warmth Training provided by Wyre Forest District Council. The training aims to raise awareness about the importance of a well insulated homes and provides information and sign posting for grants available to insulate lofts and cavity walls and to install energy efficient heating systems

d) Greater Learning and Participation

- I. Partners are engaged in looking at the Sladen School site as a possibility for a learning and skills centre. There is a lot of interest from the Learning and Skills Council to provide capital support for the project, and other funding streams are being pursued in order to finance the centre

e) Improved Health and Wellbeing

- I. Pedometer training – 28 frontline staff received brief interventions training and pedometer pack to use with their clients with the aim of increasing physical activity levels
 - II. Affordable Warmth – one training session per quarter to encourage frontline staff from a range of agencies to identify those living in fuel poverty and refer them for grants, help or advice
 - III. A Specialist Heart Failure Nurse has been appointed
 - IV. World Mental Health Day – ‘Food and Mood’ event with Age Concern at the Tulip Tree Centre
 - V. Two new EXTEND classes (gentle exercises) have started – one at Kidderminster Library and one at St. Oswald’s Church Hall in Broadwaters
- 4.3 The Partnership has also been successful in appointing a Wyre Forest Matters Partnership Manager for a temporary two year contract, which has been funded through partner contributions and commenced in October 2006. The purpose of the post is to co-ordinate the strategic and operational delivery of partnership activity at a district level and to ensure that district issues, where appropriate, are represented in an effective and timely manner to the Worcestershire Partnership.

5. REVIEW

- 5.1 A scoping paper is currently being developed to support the review of the Community Strategy. The review will aim to bring the Strategy up to date in terms of progress and developments within the District, to re-focus activities on current challenges and priorities, and to consider the national developments as detailed in paragraph 3.5 which will include aligning it with the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement and making the appropriate links with the Local Development Framework for the District.
- 5.2 The Leads of the Wyre Forest Matters Theme Groups will be involved on a working group to support the revision. This group will initially consider the progress made over the last three years, and the top priorities for each Theme.

- 5.3 Information gathered over the last 18 months through resident surveys (e.g. the pending Mori survey (Feb 2007) and the Community Safety survey (Oct 2006), partner research, (e.g. the Health Profile for the Wyre Forest District (2006) and completed Parish Plans), and statistical information, (drawn from www.neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk and www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk etc) will be collated and analysed to discover an up-to-date picture of the District's position and challenges.
- 5.4 The revised Community Strategy will be aligned to Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement (LAA), such that the Theme headings are consistent across both, and work will be done to establish what the LAA means to the Wyre Forest District. Targets within the LAA will be suggested for inclusion in the Wyre Forest Matters Community Strategy.
- 5.5 The Strategy will also have to consider the Local Government White Paper, including the part which states that Community Strategies must become Sustainable Community Strategies. The Government has set out a definition of a sustainable community, which states that a sustainable community is a "place where people want to live and work, now and in the future". The components of such a community relate to it being "active, inclusive and safe, well run, environmentally sensitive, well designed and built, well connected, thriving, well served and fair for everyone".
- 5.6 A programme of consultation will be key to the successful revision of the Community Strategy. Details on this will be put forward to the Wyre Forest Matters Strategic Board meeting in March 2007.
- 5.7 It is envisaged that a fully reviewed Strategy will be adopted by the Wyre Forest Matters Strategic Board at its meeting in September 2007.

6. KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 There are a number of key issues facing the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership, which include:
- a) Participating fully in the delivery of the Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill project, and the Community Strategy as a whole
 - b) Successfully revising the current Community Strategy and then monitoring it and evaluating the success of schemes/projects carried out
 - c) Reviewing the structure of the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership following the Community Strategy Review and ensuring it is fit for purpose
 - d) Contributing effectively to the delivery of the LAA, via the County Theme Groups

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Community Strategy seeks to redirect and pool existing resources from the mainstream budgets of partner organisations. This approach should help to build sustainability and the ownership of Partnership activities rather than rely on time limited funds from central government.

7.2 It should be noted that the Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill project is pump-primed with one-off Government funding of £100,000, and if targets are met, it brings a reward grant of roughly £1,000,000 into the Worcestershire Partnership.

8. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Legal implications are set out in paragraph 3.2.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 There are no risk management issues at present in connection with this report.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The Wyre Forest Matters Partnership continues to build on its successful foundations. However, the Partnership now needs to review its current structures and systems to ensure they are robust enough to maximise the opportunities provided by the Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill project, and the LAA.

11. CONSULTEES

- Leader of the Council
- Corporate Management Team

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Helping to Transform Your Life (2004-2014) – A Community Strategy for the Wyre Forest District (available on the Council's website and Intranet)