

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
27th SEPTEMBER 2007

Proposed Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	Shared Prosperity
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Promoting Economic Prosperity
KEY PRIORITY:	Regeneration
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Stephen Clee
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning Health and Environment
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APPENDICES:	N/A

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise Members of the purpose and scope of a 'regeneration prospectus' for Kidderminster and to agree a process and timetable for implementation.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE :

- 2.1 That the approach to preparing a 'Regeneration Prospectus' for Kidderminster as set out in this report be approved; and
- 2.2 Cabinet receive further reports to agree the scoping document for consultation, the results of the consultation and the final draft of the Prospectus and consider the financial situation as part of the 2008/09 budget process.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2005, the District Council adopted its Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy for Kidderminster. This followed discussions with Government Office for the West Midlands and Advantage West Midlands and an appraisal by West Midlands Enterprise Ltd. The strategy highlights a number of significant challenges facing the town including low household incomes and low skill levels and recognises the potential of significant development opportunities within town.
- 3.2 The proposed prospectus subject of this paper is a means of taking the strategy forward to continue to raise the profile of Kidderminster within the region and deliver physical change. By articulating the challenges and opportunities the aim is to help promote the case for regional support. It is, therefore, timely in the context of the emerging Regional Economic Strategy, the final draft of which was considered by Cabinet in July 2007.

4. KEY ISSUES

West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES)

- 4.1 The purpose of the WMES is to provide a clear framework for achieving future economic prosperity across the West Midlands. It provides a basis for the support of the key agencies and investment decisions to aid economic regeneration and to raise the economic performance of the region.
- 4.2 In recent years Bewdley, Stourport-on-Severn and the rural west of the District have benefited from regional support through the Market Towns Initiative and Rural Regeneration Zone. However, Kidderminster has had no strategic fit within the Regional Economic Strategy and as such the Regional Development Agency has not been able to offer the same degree of support to the town.
- 4.3 The WMES is now under review and it is worth noting that Kidderminster is now specifically mentioned in the final draft, which Wyre Forest District Council has supported. However, it is not the case that significant levels of additional regional support and investment will automatically follow. The final Strategy is due to be published in November 2007.
- 4.4 In order for the Council to play a full role in delivering the Regional Strategy it will be essential that the local partners can demonstrate to potential funders that the District has the vision and capacity to deliver a coherent regeneration strategy for the town. Whilst the Kidderminster Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy is a good starting point, it is now important for the various ideas set out below to be worked up in more detail and the Prospectus will assist in this regard. This will also provide the basis for joint working with Advantage West Midlands and Worcestershire Partnership.

Kidderminster Economic Development & Regeneration Strategy, 2005

- 4.5 The following key challenges and opportunities are identified in the strategy:
- Continuing the physical regeneration of both the town centre and other identified areas;
 - Developing underused and vacant sites into high quality employment areas, attracting new companies;
 - Encouraging people to visit and stay in the area and improving educational attainment and skill levels to enable local people to take advantage of new employment opportunities; and
 - Connecting people to economic opportunity... accessibility, skills and training
- 4.6 The strategic objectives include:
- To establish, enhance and maintain Kidderminster as a recognised area of business growth that attracts inward investment and generates high quality jobs
 - To establish, enhance and maintain accessible, attractive and safe business areas, facilities and centres in which to live, work and visit
 - To promote the town as a high quality business, commercial and retail location and visitor destination – image & brand
- 4.7 Key to delivering these objectives will be regenerating the following areas:-
- Worcester Street, the former Magistrates Court - KTC3
 - Stourport Road Employment Corridor (SREC) – former British Sugar Site
 - Other priority employment sites... some now being realised including Easter Group and Finepoint.
 - Other underused and derelict sites within and around the town centre

Wyre Forest District Local Plan, 2004

- 4.8 The Local Plan identifies a number of key opportunity areas and earmarks land for redevelopment within and adjacent to the town centre including Policy KTC.3 and KTC.4 together with areas adjacent to the town centre such as the Timber Yard in Park Lane. It similarly allocates large sites within the SREC for business. More detailed briefs and frameworks have been prepared by the authority for some of these opportunity sites e.g. Park Lane Public Realm Framework.
- 4.9 The Local Plan is now under review through the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) with the Core Strategy subject to public consultation. The LDF Core Strategy will set the scene for more detailed plans to follow including Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan both of which are due to be prepared between now and 2011. This process is expected to identify new development pressures and opportunities within the town including the potential to continue regenerating the Horsefair neighbourhood.
- 4.10 Members may recall through their recent consideration of the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper the identification of a number of anticipated strategic development opportunities within Kidderminster. The prospectus may consolidate these through developing the concept of an 'Arc of Opportunity' which connects the SREC in the south through the town centre to Horsefair in the north (along the route of the A451).
- 4.11 It is envisaged that the Prospectus will provide a key part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework and in particular help to identify the capacity to deliver results. In partnership with key stakeholders including the Oldington & Foley Park Pathfinder, Town Centre Partnership and Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership, it is also envisaged that the prospectus will pave the way for the emergence of new development and regeneration opportunities within the town with an implementation plan to provide a realistic and phased approach to achieving more sustainable forms of development.

Wyre Forest District Design Quality SPG, 2004

- 4.12 The Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted in June 2004 includes an integral 'Kidderminster Town Centre Design Guide'. This highlights a number of key issues to be addressed within and around the town centre including the barrier presented by the town centre ring road and the need to improve links with Comberton Hill with consequential links to image & brand.

Wyre Forest District Council: Brand Strategy, 2006

- 4.13 The issue of the image and brand of 'place' are also considered in the Council's Brand Strategy. In this respect, the Prospectus may help by tackling issues that have District wide implications. The aim of the regeneration programme will be to tackle deprivation issues and realise opportunities that should help bring Kidderminster more in line with the wider district economy. The Prospectus is an opportunity to promote the District as much as to showcase Kidderminster.

Oldington & Foley Park Pathfinder, Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership and Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership

- 4.14 The above partnerships happen to cover the emerging 'Arc of Opportunity' or A451 corridor and provide important delivery mechanisms for the regeneration agenda. This includes the Oldington and Foley Park Ward where the redevelopment of major business sites along the

SREC will have a key role to play, in particular the former British Sugar site and the Horsefair area to the north of the town centre, where on-going regeneration will spread.

- 4.15 The Pathfinder is integral to delivering the successful regeneration of the Oldington and Foley Park area. Similarly, within the Broadwaters and Greenhill Wards, the Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership will have a key role to play. They will both assist towards delivering the Local Area Agreement and should further support a joined up approach to funding and delivery. In the town centre, the District Council and Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership continue to implement the Partnership's business plan.

5. THE PROPOSAL – CONTENT & PROCESS

- 5.1 In order to bring together the possibilities and provide a more detailed framework to take forward the actions identified in Section 3 above, the 2007/08 Planning Health and Environment Business Plan includes proposals to prepare a "Prospectus" to highlight Kidderminster's regeneration opportunities and provide a delivery plan.
- 5.2 At the broadest level the aim is to deliver a programme for regeneration that the whole community can subscribe to and feel a part of. This will involve working very closely with the local partnerships, set out above, together with the Local Strategic Partnership - Wyre Forest Matters.
- 5.3 It is envisaged that the Prospectus will be highly visual, containing artists' impressions and aerial photography to bring the vision to life. In this respect urban design will have a key role to play. However, the end product will crucially be a live tool for delivering regeneration and will need to tackle some of the key challenges such as addressing any obstacles and barriers to regeneration and development. It is also a key opportunity to encourage partners both within the district and across the region to get behind Kidderminster and recognise the potential, so generating greater confidence in the town as a place to invest, work, visit and live.
- 5.4 The proposal will also help to ascertain investor commitment in addition to securing further investment and creating a beneficial network and sustainable regeneration process. The final 'Prospectus' document and the associated process (outlined below) will be an important strand in delivering the Council's sustainable development and 'place making' agenda for Kidderminster.
- 5.5 The following geographic areas, which focus on the A451 'Arc of Opportunity', are likely to be subject to more detailed scrutiny:
- Worcester Street (KTC 3) & links to railway station (Comberton Hill)
 - Green Street and New Road – Carpet Heritage Processions (KTC.4)
 - Other town centre opportunities e.g. Step Entry, Blackwell Street...
 - Park Lane (Opposite Weavers Wharf) & the Canal Corridor
 - Stourport Road Employment Corridor - to include the former ROM wire, British Sugar and Folkes Forging sites.
 - Churchfields and Horsefair
- 5.6 Over the coming months the Council's Regeneration & Economic Prosperity team will be working jointly with key stakeholders to ascertain the main issues to be considered through the Prospectus and to discuss the opportunity it presents. Where possible the team will look to learn from other research undertaken locally such as the anticipated consultation feedback on the LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper and work being carried out on behalf of local partnerships.

- 5.7 It is likely that this initial process will include discussions with the three local area partnerships outlined in Section 3 (above), in addition to the normal statutory consultees together with the local development and business community. There is also a need for further dialogue with regional and sub-regional stakeholders including Worcestershire County Council and Advantage West Midlands.
- 5.8 It is considered appropriate to undertake preparation of the Prospectus in two parts. Firstly, once the various issues have been scoped, it is envisaged that an initial stage of public consultation will be undertaken to facilitate wider discussion within the community. This could lead to more detailed work being undertaken during Spring 2008. The second stage will look to bring the ideas to life through the preparation of a highly visual and promotional document ('the Prospectus').
- 5.9 It is envisaged that the proposed consultation stages for the Prospectus will coincide and be jointly undertaken as appropriate with future consultation in connection with the LDF Core Strategy.

5.10 Provisional Timetable:

July – Dec 2007	scoping with key stakeholders to understand key opportunities and challenges
Dec – Jan 2008	PART ONE: Prospectus scoping paper considered by the Communities and Regeneration Committee and Cabinet
Mar - Apr 2008	PART ONE: Public Consultation on scoping paper
May 2008	Consultation responses considered
June – Jul 2008	PART TWO: Draft Prospectus including artists impressions, graphics and market appraisals considered by the Communities and Regeneration Committee and Cabinet
Sept - Oct 2008	PART TWO: Public Consultation on final draft prospectus and action plan
November 2008	Adoption of Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The costs of Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus Part One (above) can be met from existing budgets. However, it is envisaged that part two will require additional funding to commission artists impressions, market appraisals and promotional activities to help bring the prospectus to life. Additional funding may therefore be sought as part of the budget setting process.

7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal or policy implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising for the Council from this report.

9. CONCLUSION

A 'Regeneration Prospectus' for Kidderminster will provide a clear vision and framework for delivering physical regeneration that complements the partnership initiatives in place across the town. It will bring together the key opportunities and should help to attract additional external resources into the area.

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 None

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- West Midlands Economic Strategy: Consultation Draft, May 2007
- Kidderminster Economic Development & Regeneration Strategy, 2005
- Wyre Forest District Local Plan, 2004
- Wyre Forest District Design Quality SPG, 2004

7th September 2007 (KH)