



Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee

Date: 23/07/08
Open Report

Report of: Ken Harrison
(Regeneration and Economic Prosperity
Manager)

Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus - Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 To advise Members of the consultation responses received during the initial stage of consultation on the Scoping Paper published in February 2008 and to consider the next steps in the development of the Regeneration Prospectus.

2. Background

- 2.1 In January 2008, Cabinet approved a Scoping Paper and consultation process for the development of a Regeneration Prospectus for Kidderminster. The Scoping Paper provided the basis for public consultation between February and June 2008.
- 2.2 The Regeneration Prospectus will be about re-organising and breathing new life into the town. It covers a wide variety of issues and requires a co-ordinated approach. No one agency, person or body can deliver effective 'regeneration' in isolation... it is about facilitating joint working and bringing together the right people and resources.
- 2.3 The Prospectus will support the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy, which recognises Kidderminster as 'a town undergoing an economic restructure'. It will also assist with the delivery of sub-regional and local priorities as set out in the emerging Local Area Agreement, Sustainable Community Strategies and Wyre Forest District Council Corporate Plan.
- 2.4 During the course of recent years, the District Council has been putting the necessary infrastructure in place to deliver economic regeneration – consistently recognised as a Council priority.
- 2.5 Funding for the development of the Prospectus was agreed as part of the budget setting process for 2008/09 with provision made for £25,000 towards development costs.

- 2.6 With the need for two stages of consultation; high quality design including artist impressions to bring the document to life; and market appraisals to provide a reality check, it is envisaged that the Prospectus could be adopted as early as the turn of the year.
- 2.7 The Scoping Paper and consultation literature has generated considerable public interest. A summary leaflet and postcards were published on the web and the postcards were also made available in the town's supermarkets.
- 2.8 The consultation process involved collaborating with the Kidderminster Shuttle which facilitated on-line comments. Other web blogs are also known to have raised discussion on the regeneration of the area.
- 2.9 The Council's regeneration team have sought to capture on-line comments to supplement those formally submitted in response to the consultation.
- 2.10 Formal responses have been received from both the general public and statutory consultees. These responses are summarised at Appendix 1 together with the comments and recommendations of the Head of Planning, Health and Environment.

3. Summary Feedback

- 3.1 The consultation responses that are summarised at Appendix 1 are in general very supportive of the overall ambition of creating a Prospectus for Regeneration.
- 3.2 There are a number of consistent themes emerging from participants which include:
 - General comments... agreement of the overall ambition;
 - Traffic & Transport are key... particular focus on congestion, key road improvements, rail/ public transport interchange, bus provision to outlying areas, car parking, improving pedestrian and cycling environment and the negative impacts of the ring road;
 - Town Centre... focus on tackling the 'older' part of town i.e. Worcester Street, co-ordinating and linking parts of town together, Park Lane and the canal corridor;
 - Tourism & Heritage... focus on hotels, leisure, canal and possible marina developments and considering the town's heritage e.g. the carpet museum;
 - Built Environment... focus on gateways, domination of roads and vehicles e.g. ring road, 'cleaning up' the Horsefair and Comberton Hill;
 - Natural Environment... focus on the River Stour and the Canal as valuable habitat and links to the visitor economy, public space in the town centre, recognising flood risk and water quality;

- Housing... focus on making a stronger connection to the delivery of housing and especially affordable housing, town centre living, capacity and support from the housing groups;
- Pedestrian Movement & Connectivity... focus on key attraction and links to town centre e.g. St Mary's, SVR, improved crossings to ring road, wider footpaths in key areas;
- Entertainment & Leisure... focus on continuing to extend the town centre leisure offer;
- Employment & Business... focus on incentives for business, enhancing skills, improving access to Stourport Road, identifying priority sectors and the former British Sugar site;
- Former British Sugar Site... in addition to above some alternative suggestions including ecological wetlands and leisure park, and discussions around the possible temporary use of the silos;
- Community (incl. Health & Education)... focus on regeneration that promotes activity and healthier lifestyles, air quality and security.

3.3 The schedule at Appendix 1 includes individual responses from Members of the public but these are kept anonymous as it was not made clear to respondents that responses would be made public. The main consultee respondents included:

- The Bromford Group (Housing Association)
- Centro
- Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council
- Community First
- David McLean Homes
- Disability Action Wyre Forest
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Government Office West Midlands
- Inland Waterways Association
- Natural England
- Oldington & Foley Park Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder
- Topland Group
- Waterloo Housing Association
- Worcestershire County Council – Economic Development Team
- Worcestershire Primary Care Trust

3.4 In addition the Wyre Forest Liberal Democrats and Wyre Forest Liberal Party submitted a discussion document in response to the consultation.

3.5 All of the comments have been distilled and summarised in Appendix 1. In terms of the comments and recommendations of the Head of Planning, Health and Environment, most of these can be categorised in one of the following ways:

- a No further action required
- b Agree – further consideration to be given as part of detailed development
- c Agree in part – further discussions required with partners to understand possibilities.

4. Next Stages of Development

- 4.1 Discussions will continue with key partners both internal and external of the District Council to fully understand the possibilities and consider the consultation responses.
- 4.2 Over the summer work will be undertaken to develop the detailed elements of the prospectus. This will include the development of artists impressions and master plan options for key regeneration sites within and around the town centre. These will be determined to coincide with the key sites emerging through the development of the Local Development Framework.
- 4.3 In addition to physical regeneration consideration will also be given to major sociological, environmental and economic programmes to be showcased. These may include working with the Learning and Skills Council, Natural England's proposals for the Wilden Marsh, and proposals to emerge from prominent business leaders.
- 4.4 Specialist urban designers, architects and transport advisers together with economic impact experts are currently being appointed to provide the necessary information. It is envisaged that the economic assessment work will also consider future employment prospects as set out in *Appendix 2* which is a matter subject of a proposed review considered elsewhere on this agenda.
- 4.5 A funding application has been made to Advantage West Midlands for a contribution towards the development of the Prospectus to supplement the existing budget of £25,000. Worcestershire County Council is also supporting the project.

5. Process & Timetable

- 5.1 With the first stage of consultation now closed the focus is now on developing more detailed draft proposals. The next round of consultation will involve a series of consultation events (combination of conference, seminars and workshops) and road shows to promote, develop and explore the challenges and opportunities.

5.2 It is considered that the proposed consultation stages for the Prospectus continue to complement the Local Development Framework.

5.3 Latest Timetable:

June - Aug 2008	Consultation responses considered
June – Aug 2008	Draft Prospectus including artists impressions, graphics and market appraisals considered by the Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet
Oct – Nov 2008	Public Consultation on final draft prospectus and action plan
Dec – Jan 2008	Adoption of Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus

6. Options for the Committee

6.1 Recommend the comments responses of the Head of Planning, Health and Environment to Cabinet as set out at *Appendix 1*;

6.2 To recommend the proposed next steps to preparing the 'Regeneration Prospectus' for Kidderminster as set out in this Paper and;

6.3 Note that further reports be considered by the Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee prior to public consultation in October/ November 2008.

6.4 To agree the scoping for the Employment and Economic Prospects Review as set out in Appendix 2.

7. 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
- '*Connecting Kidderminster*' – Scoping Paper, January 2008

8. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Schedule of responses & proposed actions
- Appendix 2 – Employment Prospects Review – Scoping Form

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