

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
25th SEPTEMBER 2008

Wyre Forest Matters (WFM) – Progress and Achievements

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	All
CORPORATE PLAN AIM	All
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor John Campion
HEAD OF SERVICE	Linda Collis
CONTACT OFFICER	Tracy Reck
APPENDICES	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet of the work of Wyre Forest Matters over the past year.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to **DECIDE** that:

- 2.1 The new structure of Wyre Forest Matters is endorsed.
- 2.2 The Chief Executive be authorised in consultation with The Leader to support the work of the LSP and the LSP priorities as outlined in the “Making a Real Difference” Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA).
- 2.3 The progress of the LSP and its current work to develop an action plan to prioritise the delivery of the SCS and the LAA is endorsed and request that the Chief Executive monitors progress and reports such progress, on a regular basis, to Members.
- 2.3 The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive ensures that Wyre Forest benefits from a fair and equitable distribution of any potential LAA reward monies in 2009 within any criteria adopted by the Worcestershire Partnership.

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 original Community Strategy “Helping to Transform your Life” 2004-2014 recently underwent an review, resulting in the production of Wyre Forest Matters Sustainable Community Strategy “Making a Real Difference” 2008-2014. This was endorsed by full Council on 27th February 2008.
- 3.3 The Partnership's most significant achievement to date is the successful bid for a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder for the District's most deprived Ward, Oldington and Foley Park. This brought in £2.5 million for a seven year period to assist with the regeneration of the area, skills improvement, health improvement, community safety and education targets and the overall wellbeing of the residents.
- 3.4 In October 2006 Wyre Forest Matters employed a Partnership Manager on a temporary two year contract, using funds from different organisations engaged in the partnership, including Wyre Forest District Council, The Community Housing Group, the Oldington and Foley Park Pathfinder, West Mercia Police and the Primary Care Trust. The Partnership Manager's contract is currently extended till August 2009.

4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 4.1 **2006 – ongoing: Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership**
WFM commissioned the creation of the Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill (HBG) Partnership and invested in the delivery of the LPSA2 targets. The focussed work of this Partnership has resulted in significant reductions in crime and deliberate fires in the district. In July 2007, the LSP Review Scrutiny Committee was established and led by Councillor Fran Oborski. As a result of the work of this Committee, full Council agreed a further investment of £30,000 to employ a Co-ordinator to support the HBG Partnership.
- 4.2 **December 2006 – ongoing: Improving Communication**
The WFM Partnership Manager led the creation of the Minimum Standards, a set of principles to improve the communication between Worcestershire Partnership LAA Theme Groups and District LSPs. This project is currently being rolled out, and will ensure greater awareness at both levels of what is happening to deliver the LAA.
- 4.3 **September 2007: Contributing to the County Sustainable Community Strategy**
WFM responded to the Worcestershire Partnership's consultation on their county Sustainable Community Strategy, to ensure Wyre Forest priorities were reflected. Districts were asked to submit four priorities, and those put forward by WFM were: improved educational attainment, economic success, tackling congestion and improving neighbourhood regeneration in our deprived wards.
- 4.4 **October 2007 – June 2008: WFM Restructure**

WFM underwent a process of restructuring with the aim of strengthening and refocusing the LSP. This resulted in part, in the creation of the WFM Forum which will enable more partners, including all elected members, to be involved in the work of the LSP. The Board was also revitalised to become more clearly focused on strategic issues and a recognised force for positive change and partnership working in Wyre Forest District.

4.5 December 2007 – ongoing: Migrant Communities Work

WFM established a task group to respond to the issues of migrant communities in the Wyre Forest district. Following a successful presentation at the Worcestershire Partnership Board, this group is now driving forward a “welcome to Worcestershire” website on behalf of the county. The WFM task group also instigated the creation of a county-wide intelligence database on migrant communities, which is proving of great interest and value to many partners.

4.6 April 2008: Revised District Sustainable Community Strategy

WFM launched the revised Sustainable Community Strategy “Making a Real Difference at an event attended by over 60 individuals from all sectors in the district. This strategy is closely linked to the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement, and was a key influence within the review of the WFDC Corporate Plan. The revised strategy followed an extensive review and consultation process with partners and Members via the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in 2007.

4.7 June 2008: Co-ordinated Consultation “ASK ME” database

In line with recommendations from the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper (October 2006) and in order to promote efficiency and reduce duplication, WFM agreed to ensure partners’ consultation exercises were collated and the results shared. It was also agreed to place these consultations on the Ask-Me consultation planner, which is a tool already used by Wyre Forest District Council to assist in sharing consultation results across sectors and so avoid consultation overload.

4.8 June 2008: WFM web site

www.wyreforestmatters.co.uk was launched as an information resource for partners on the district and county LSP and the Worcestershire LAA. Elected members were informed via an electronic bulletin from the WFM Partnership Manager and will be encouraged to access this web site in order to keep abreast of activity in the partnership.

4.9 June 2008: Members Briefing

WFM was successful in attracting resources to the district from the GOWM/LGA Learning to Deliver programme to support elected members in understanding their role in engaging with the LSP and

delivering the LAA. 25 members attended the resulting Member Briefing session held on June 30th 2008.

4.10 June 2008 – ongoing: Tidy Wyre Forest Campaign

WFM agreed to establish a task group to develop a Tidy WF Campaign to empower residents to organise their own tidy ups and contribute to a cleaner, greener environment and National Indicator 195a of the LAA (improved street and environmental cleanliness). This project was launched in September 2008, and a number of tidy ups are already registered to take place across the Wyre Forest district.

4.11 July 2008: WFM Forum

The first WFM Forum was held on July 31st. Over 40 partners attended and information was gathered relating to work being undertaken in the Wyre Forest district which contributes positively to the achievement of LAA targets. The next Forum is scheduled for October 2008, and all elected members will again receive an invite.

4.12 July 2008 – ongoing: WFM Theme Groups

Over the past few months, two of WFM's sub-groups have been revising their remits and strengthening their structures, as follows:

- The Children and Young People's sub-group will soon have responsibility for commissioning selected services for young people, as set out in the Worcestershire County Council Integrated Youth Support Strategy. The provision of and access to educational and recreational leisure time activities will be the first localised commissioning activity, and this is expected to come into force over the next year.
- The Health and Wellbeing sub group has been gearing up in order to allocate £15,000 which has been given to WFM by the Worcestershire PCT for use on health projects. Local priorities have been set, in line with the Sustainable Community Strategy, and bids will be invited in the New Year. This group is also using its coordinating role to draw together the various bids going into the county-wide Health Improvement Fund, which focuses on achieving health targets within the LAA.

4.13 September 2008: LAA Reward Grant

WFM agreed at its Board meeting on 1st September 2008 to write to the Worcestershire Partnership to request they consider top-slicing the LAA 2006-9 reward grant (currently standing at £8.5 million) in order to allocate a proportion to each LSP. Each district LSP has written a similar letter based upon the view that district LSPs have contributed a great deal to achieving the LAA targets and continue to do so.

4.14 September 2008 – ongoing: Reducing Carbon Emissions / Tackling Fuel Poverty

The WFM Partnership Manager is currently leading a project to bring £92,000 into the County to enable the LSPs to deliver on National Indicator 186 (reducing carbon emissions) and National Indicator 187 (tackling fuel poverty). This project, if approved, will consist of a thermal imaging flyover carried out for each district to provide a heat loss map for all households, which will be overlaid with vulnerability data. Once the data is in place, existing schemes designed to improve the energy efficiency of homes, such as the Warm Front grants etc, will be targeted to improve their uptake, thereby improving thermal comfort of residents and reducing carbon emissions. This is built on very successful practice in Wychavon.

4.15 September 2008 – ongoing: Action Planning

WFM agreed at its Board meeting on 1st September 2008 to establish a task group to develop a clear action plan to prioritise and implement targets from the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA. This action plan will be presented at the next WFM Board meeting on 1st December 2008, and will guide the use of any potential LAA monies the LSP is awarded.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 It is important to note the potential allocation of a proportion of the £8.5 million LAA 2006-2009 reward grant to WFM and the other district LSPs. This will provide WFM with a fund to directly commission and/or develop projects which will help to achieve the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA targets. No reward monies are due to be paid until September 2009.

5.2 The Council has previously made a financial contribution to the employment of the WFM Partnership Manager and needs to consider its ongoing contribution to this post, which is due to end in August 2009.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 WFM recognises the need to continue to meet legislation with regard to greater involvement of local communities, such as:

- Communities in Control
- Unlocking the talent in our communities
- The Local Government and Involvement in Public Health Act 2007

6.2 WFM and WFDC are working together in preparation for Comprehensive Area Assessment in developing performance management frameworks. These will enable capture of relevant data and evidence, including that of partners, on the National Indicators, progress against the outcomes in the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Wyre forest District Council Corporate Plan.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Effective partnership working has been identified as a corporate risk. The Wyre Forest Matters Partnership provides a measured approach to partnership working whereby specific outcomes, which support those of the Council, are delivered as a result.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Wyre Forest District Council is committed to and actively supports the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership and has a large role to play in many of the above achievements and ongoing pieces of work. WFM is committed, through regular monthly bulletins and the Forum, to keep members aware of and engaged in its work.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 CMT
9.2 Councillor John Campion – Leader of the Council