



Regeneration and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee

Date: 15/10/08
Open Report
Report of: **Steve Singleton**
(Economic Development and Tourism
Manager)

Wyre Forest District Draft Rural Economic Strategy

1. Purpose of Briefing Paper

- 1.1 To seek views and comments on the draft District Rural Economic Strategy prior to the Strategy being reported to Cabinet for approval.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 At its meeting on 7th February 2008, the former Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel recommended to Cabinet that a draft Rural Economic Strategy Scoping Paper be endorsed as the basis for the development of a draft strategy for public consultation.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 21st February 2008, the Cabinet approved the Draft Rural Economic Strategy Scoping Paper as the basis for the development of a draft Strategy document and subsequent public consultation.
- 2.3 Members are reminded that whilst there are strategies and initiatives aimed at developing the urban areas of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley, no strategy currently exists to address economic issues within the district's significant rural areas.
- 2.4 A high proportion (over 85% in land use terms) of Wyre Forest District is classed as "rural". The Rural Economic Strategy is the first document that puts the economic issues of the rural areas of the District within an agreed framework.
- 2.5 The first stage in developing the strategy was to draft a Scoping Paper which:-
- gave a contextual framework of other relevant strategies
 - proposed a number of aims and objectives
 - set out an initial SWOT analysis and

- identified proposed consultees and a timetable for the development of the strategy.

The Scoping Paper invited responses to a number of questions relating to the above.

- 2.6 A working draft Strategy document was subsequently prepared which has been consulted on by a wide variety of organisations
- 2.7 The current draft, (Appendix 1) reflects the comments made from the consultee organisations – which have been tabulated in Appendix 2.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The Strategy identifies a joined-up approach to economic development in the District's rural areas.
- 3.2 The Strategy will help to inform the emerging Local Development Framework and other relevant local and sub regional initiatives.
- 3.3 Members should note that following the adoption of the Strategy, an Action Plan will be drafted and submitted to this Committee and the Cabinet for approval in December 2008.

4. Options for the Committee

- 4.1 The Committee may wish to:
- Endorse and recommend to Cabinet the Draft Rural Economic Strategy
 - Put forward alternative or additional proposals for consideration by the Cabinet

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Draft Rural Economic Strategy Scoping Paper.

7. Consultees

- Head of Community and Partnership Services
- Head of Financial Services
- Head of Legal and Democratic Services
- Head of Property and Operational Services

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Draft Rural Economic Strategy
8.2 Appendix 2 – Responses to Consultation

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